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# NATIONHOOD FOR INDIA

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## PREFACE

IN our post-war world, the problems of India are symptomatic of several new situations that we have to face. To outward seeming, they centre in the weariness of a tutored people with a benevolent, if somewhat unimaginative, tutelage. Their gravity lies in the fact that the people concerned number one-fifth of the whole population of the globe. But their essence is that they represent a conflict of civilizations, complicated by the racial question of colour. These gigantic issues—the clash of civilizations and the adjustment of racial interests—must sooner or later involve the whole world; and they have emerged in India before the world was ready for them. They have now to be thought out, if humanity is not to shipwreck.

This little book aims at setting out, so far as India is concerned, the chief factors in the conflict, and some of the measures which are being concerted for abating it. The thesis is that, stripped of all political trappings, all sentiment, and all misleading analogies, the real driving force behind India's discontents and claims is the spirit of Hinduism, eager for the preservation—it may even be for the restoration—of its power. Other forces are also at work. Among a certain section of the Indian peoples, there is a genuine desire for greater independence, and for a more self-respecting place among the nations of the world; coupled with this, there is a recognition that much has to be altered in India's social and economic structure, and reform in those directions is an object of sincere, though yet circumscribed, effort. At the other end of the scale, a sinister influence is much in

evidence—the turbulence which is never far from the surface in India when the arm of the civil power is weakened.

Wholly separable, however, from those incidental forces is the alarm which pervades an ancient, conservative, and elaborately organized civilization when its foundations are threatened by new ideals and practices. Hinduism, though the least eclectic of cultures, has yet been obliged in its long history to assimilate much that it at first rejected. Similarly, it is absorbing freely from the civilization of the modern West; but its receptivity has limits. In several essentials the culture of the West is based on theories, and produces results, which are wholly repugnant to orthodox Hinduism; and orthodox Hinduism is not going to accept them unless there is a more drastic change in human nature than political constitutions can effect. Our modern world of democracy, however, pins its faith on political constitutions; and the book accordingly includes a summary of the most recent proposals for the development of free institutions in India.

What follows consists, with some formal changes, of three papers which were read before the Institute of Politics at Williamstown (Mass., U.S.A.) in August 1930. In an Epilogue is summarized the work of the important Round-Table Conference which sat in London during December 1930 and January 1931. It is hoped—and nothing more ambitious is aimed at—that a certain amount of intelligible material will be furnished to those who, though not intimate with Indian conditions, wish to follow with understanding the coming changes in the Indian scene.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE ORIGINS AND GROWTH OF HINDUISM

INDIA is essentially the child of its history. Not one of the features in Indian life to-day which bewilder the Western observer is without its origins in a more or less remote past. We may try to penetrate the tangled maze of the caste system, with its bearing on individual progress, or to fathom the status of women, with its dysgenic reactions on the race, or to estimate the backwardness of the masses, with its dead hand on free institutions; but, if we seek to examine these or almost any other of India's major problems, we shall find that, for a true understanding of them, we have to turn, not only to the pages of history, but to the induced knowledge of pre-history. For pure intellectual fascination, few achievements of modern scholarship can equal that by which the pre-history of India is being reconstructed. Every year adds to the structure; but which of us can foresee its majestic future? For the wealth of material which awaits exploration in India, chiefly by the spade of the trained archaeologist, is still immense. What we know already, however, enables us with some confidence to trace the far-off beginnings of much in India that occupies men's minds to-day.

Permeating all our general conceptions of bygone India must be that of a country singularly isolated and absorbent, with few entrances and practically no exits. In Europe the ancient world was one of much racial movement and migration; the medieval world was busy with the comings and goings of soldiers and adventurers, travellers and scholars, for whom national boundaries were of small account. Not so

with India. There was no continental interchange of men and thought. Almost a continent in itself, its land frontiers were great mountain masses, the loftiest and densest on this globe, while elsewhere the unknown terrors of Ocean guarded it. Into this pocket on the earth's surface there flowed wave after wave of the human race—not to recede again (for though Alexander of Macedon receded, he had never reached the real India), but to soak into the soil. There was, it is true, a certain amount of commerce by sea with the West, from Phœnician times onward, and we hear of occasional missions to Western courts; while the hurricanes of changing dynasties in outer Asia—Persian, Syrian, Bactrian, Parthian—blustered at times across the Indus, and even into the Ganges Valley. But it was all very partial and spasmodic, this intercourse with the outer world. India received nothing of the critical artistry of Greece, or of the Roman spirit of history and practical administration, or of the rivalry between faith and works which came later with Christianity. It lived in seclusion, in itself and for itself, churning over and over for centuries, under enervating skies, its own speculations on life and eternity. No cleansing winds of outside thought swept through the galleries of its mind.

Of the real aborigines of India we know so little that for our present purpose we need not go farther back than the Neolithic race known as the Dravidians. Who they were, or whence they came, are problems yet unsolved. That their languages have no affinities elsewhere, except perhaps with the so-called Scythian family, is a fact of some negative importance: that they may have entered India from the north-west is a positive speculation, also with a linguistic basis. That they covered the greater part of the land is

apparent, mingling with the still older races in the more habitable parts, dwelling in fortified places, and building up a civilization of their own. It was probably one of the great cultures of the ancient world. The Indo-Aryan invaders, when they swarmed down with simpler mind and from healthier lands into the old and complex life which they found in the plains of India, thought little of it and wrote spitefully of it, just as we can imagine the Goths belittling and despising the civilization of Rome. History has long followed their example; and it is only now that we are coming to recognize the richness of the Dravidian background. Its connexion with Sumerian culture has been revealed by recent excavations in Sind and Baluchistan, and private scholars like Dr. Gilbert Slater have begun to trace its enduring penetration into the India of to-day.

Whatever may have been the ethnical origins of this ancient race, they had clearly passed, as all their successors have done, under the domination of their environment. Their isolation, the pressure of a tropical climate, the scourge of flood and drought and pestilence, the suddenness of epidemic death, the insidious power of the magic and devil-worship of the older inhabitants—all these must have combined to turn the Dravidian mind into channels which are still active in India. When, therefore, the second great wave of invasion began to surge into India it brought with it a people whose outlook on life was fundamentally different from that which they found on the soil. The Indo-Aryans, cousins of the ancestors of most of the white races in our modern world, were, as scholars deduce from the Vedic records, a simple, open-air people, of pastoral pursuits. Fond of horses and of sport, adept hunters, meat-eaters, and not

averse from fermented liquors—the type has been perpetuated with the Aryan blood in other lands, down to our own day and generation. Their women were free, and chose their own mates. Family ties were strong, and family discipline effective. In their religion there is no trace of totemism, nor of any revolting rites: their gods ‘were the great phenomena of nature, conceived as alive, and usually represented in anthropomorphic shape’.<sup>1</sup> For the most part, they were cheerful gods, amenable to simple offerings and sacrifices; but they were many and various in power, from the Sky, the Fire (sun, lightning, &c.), the Dawn, the Morning and Evening Stars, down to water-nymphs and sprites of the air. In every single feature, both of mind and of action, these new-comers must have differed, as poles asunder, from the people upon whom they flung themselves when they emerged, after their long wanderings, from the north-western passes into the fertile Indus Valley.

How they girt their loins and hardened their hearts we can readily picture. Even so did the Israelites as they cleared their way through the heathen of Arabia to the promised land; and the old Dutchmen of South Africa as they trekked into the unknown among Kafir and Hottentot. Racial arrogance asserted itself, and the pride of colour. The autochthones were a dark-skinned people—not men but demons, says the Veda, fit only to be extirpated or enslaved, and woe betide the Aryan who has commerce with them or mercy upon them. To imbibe the spirit there is no need to wrestle with the ancient Sanskrit texts. Turn to the 23rd and 24th chapters of the Book of Joshua, and you have it in all its essentials: Remember the God of your Fathers, muttered the dying warrior-

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Berriedale Keith, *Cambridge History of India*, i. 103.

king, and have no dealings with either the gods or the women of the Amorite. From these inhibitions was sown the seed of the caste problem generally, and of that section of it which is commonly known as the problem of the Untouchables—the presence, to wit, in India to-day of many millions of worthy, industrious people whose mere touch defiles the members of a higher caste. The first beginning of caste was merely a colour bar, intended to preserve the purity of the Aryan blood, as well as to protect, we may conjecture, the old simple Nature-worship of the Aryan tribes from contamination by the mysteries and superstitions of the older world.

From the Indus Valley, the Aryans pushed onward and eastward, lured by adventure and fresh pastures, goaded from behind by renewed incursions of kindred tribes. At first it was a progress of war and conquest; there are echoes of the Dravidians retreating into their strongholds, of sieges and triumphs and captive slaves. In the thinly-held tract between the Indus and the Jumna the invaders possessed the land in strength, settled it with their wives and families, and lived the glowing life of the earlier Vedic epics. But, with their continued advance into the richer and more densely peopled Ganges Valley, came change. The men-demons were no longer in flight before conquerors. We hear of wealthy and powerful chiefs among them, and of alliances, possibly the outcome of equal contests. Alliances we can imagine to have often been cemented, as in all history, by marriages. With inter-marriage came new gods, new rites, new tongues; and the slow process of absorption and assimilation had made its insidious start. It is thus the Ganges Valley which was the cradle of modern India. As the Aryan waves gradually penetrated and soaked into it,

there grew up that marvellous system of social life and religion, of entwining the seen with the unseen, time with eternity, which we know as Hinduism.

Of all its marvels, the Brahman is the chief. According to his own account, he sprang from the head of the Creator—a metaphor designed to indicate his sustained and acute intellectual powers. Of his more prosaic human origins we can only speculate that he was the product of specialization. In earlier days the chief of the tribe was himself competent to make the necessary offerings to the friendly gods on the eve of the march or battle. Later, king and priest became differentiated as the task of securing divine aid grew more solemn and complex; and, once the priestly rank was established, its aggrandizement was sure. In the process we seem to see at least three stages. First of all was the organization of a social system which was waxing more and more involved with the steady fusion of the Aryan and Dravidian stocks. This work the Brahman took in hand, and his tool was Caste. M. Senart has explained how the root conception of endogamous and exogamous groups was the common heritage of the Indo-Aryans with the Greeks and Romans. The Brahman used it, moulding it to Indian conditions and endowing it with a range and an elasticity which almost baffle scientific description. In the later Scriptures, when the old race tradition had faded, much ingenuity was wasted in grounding the caste system upon four imaginary pillars—the Brahman or priest, the Kshatriya or warrior (who afterwards disappears miraculously), the Vaisya or merchant, and the Sudra or menial. In reality the first three were merely a rough classification of Aryan society, similar to that which Herodotus recorded for Egypt and Plato for ancient Athens; while the fourth

stood for the whole despised Dravidian world. At the best, this division was never more than a literary convention, devised to emphasize the Brahman primacy. The true caste system was a grading of society in a formal framework of the type which is always dear to the Indian mind; and the Brahman made the task his own. The old ideal of maintaining the Aryan blood pure and undiluted gradually waned. Inter-marriage became no longer a matter of colour, but of permitted or forbidden groupings, to which the key rested in Brahman hands. Startling occasions of mixed marriages were condoned by being taken as the origins of new castes. But to check indiscriminate unions, the rules of Caste and the penalties for their infringement became more stringent, an invariable ingredient in the penalty for these and all other social offences being that the Brahman must be paid or fed. With invaders much later than the Aryan—with the Scythians, the Huns, and the Mongols—the Brahman proved equally successful in welding the newcomers into the hierarchy of Caste, and continuing thus the age-long absorption of mankind into the scheme of Indian life. It is no exaggeration to say that Caste is the keystone of brahmanical Hinduism.

The second stage towards Brahman domination was the development of the Hindu pantheon. The stately gods to whom the Aryan forefathers had raised their altars consorted ill with the godlings and the goblins which the Dravidians feared; but, for good or ill, their association had to be cemented, and here again was a duty that the Brahman alone could undertake. In some cases his ingenuity identified one of the older gods with an Aryan deity, as when Rudra, the storm-god of the Vedas, becomes one with Siva, the cruel Destroyer, rejoicing in blood, of the



Dravidian legends. In many cases the old Nature gods faded away into abstractions: the Sun is still an object of worship in Vedic form for the initiated, but Vishnu the Preserver has replaced him in popular veneration. Most frequently, however, there was no attempt at reconciling the irreconcilable; each worshipper was left at will to erect his own shrine and choose his own god. There was no congregational worship; the priests did no leading of their people to the deity, no interceding for them; every man propitiated in his own way the particular unknown power which he most feared or whose help at the moment he specially needed. At certain holy places of immemorial age, venerated long before the Aryan invasions, the Brahmans established themselves in force and promulgated the doctrine of pilgrimage and purification: Hurdwar, Benares, Ajmere, Jagannath are monuments of their methods. The old Aryan divinities were drawn down from the starry heavens and imprisoned with the goddesses of smallpox and gaming and the like in the one vast gallery of superhuman powers where Hinduism roams in perpetual twilight.

The third aspect of Brahmanism triumphant is very different from the accepted function of a priesthood in Western eyes. The long process of stocking the Hindu pantheon developed a synthetic side at an early stage. As the Brahman specialized in the work of the mind and the study of religious emotions, his thoughts seem to have focused on the unity amidst the vast diversity in which he moved, and the conception soon took shape of the essential oneness of what we should call the Godhead. For anthropomorphic visions of deity, however, there was no place in the inner mind of Brahmanism; it was the nature

of a universal divine essence which became the food for its philosophy. One school of philosophy, indeed, succeeded another, each more daring and more profound than its predecessor, and all engaged in speculation on the relation between sense and cognition, illusion and reality, man's soul and the infinite Ego, time and eternity. Not for the humble worshipper evidently was all this. He was fobbed off with what he could understand—the jealousies of one godling, the malignity of another, the virtue of pilgrimages, and above all the primary duty of seeing and feasting the Brahman. The future of his soul was not on the priestly conscience or in priestly care. The priesthood was too busy with the fine-drawn subtleties of its own intellectual world, in which brotherly kindness and charity played no part.

For present-day purposes, the main fruit of all those centuries of speculation is the doctrine of *Karma*, sometimes imperfectly translated as Salvation by Works, at other times as the Transmigration of Souls. The idea of an omnipresent God had matured into the conception of a universal Soul or Self, absolute, unknowable, pure intelligence emptied of all thought. All else was Illusion; but Illusion permitted of men's souls seeming to separate from the universal Soul, to be born and reborn in endless chain, until they became absorbed once again in the Infinite. According to a particular soul's deeds in one birth would be its rank in its next birth; elevation, it might be, into the body of a Brahman, or degradation into the body of an outcaste or a reptile. By deeds, however, the doctrine did not inculcate works in the Pauline sense; the import is ceremonial purity and abstention from actions capable of evil—in fact, by preference, complete inaction and self-centred

meditation. Through meditation it may be possible for the soul at last to pierce the veil of sense and Illusion, and to recognize that it is part of the universal Absolute; whereupon—and only then—it is released from the chain of reincarnations and flows into the omnipresent Self as the river flows into the sea. This in brief is *Karma*, the dominant notion in Indian religion to-day as it was 2,000 years ago. And thus the terrors of a primitive rebirth are always in the mind of the ordinary Hindu, as a stimulus to that ceremonial purity for guidance in which he needs at every turn the Brahman's aid. At the same time, the conviction that whatever he does or suffers in this life is the unalterable consequence of something that has happened in an earlier existence acts, throughout his days, as a drag on all improving effort and a steady premium on apathy—the real secret of Indian pessimism.

Here then we have the three great achievements of Brahmanism and the three essentials of Hinduism—a social system enveloped in the bonds of caste, a vast pantheon to be feared rather than loved or revered, and the doctrine of *Karma*. Nothing has ever shaken, nothing—believes the orthodox Hindu—ever will shake these three pillars of life. Not that efforts have been wanting. The greatest of all reforming endeavours, and in its inception one of the most beautiful of the world's faiths, was Buddhism. It was a revolt against the hopelessness of the Brahman creed. For its simple followers the orthodox Hinduism held out no hope of a better world. It gave them no guidance to that supreme spiritual concentration by which alone they could escape from the endless misery of birth and rebirth. But with Gautama Buddha came a new light. After years of fruitless

penance and meditation, a new gospel was revealed to him. It was the fourfold truth and the eightfold path of right living and right thinking by which the soul could slip away from the tireless wheel of existence and reach *Nirvana* or emancipation. There was to be no searching for the Unknown God, no Caste, no violence; and a monastic life was provided for men and women who desired to hasten the perfection of their souls.

The story of Buddhism does not belong to these pages. For over a thousand years it rivalled Hinduism in the affections of the people, but in the Brahman it had to face an enemy implacable and indomitable. It suffered also from internal decay, drifting into a religion of inaction, sloth, and formalism. It developed a complicated hagiolatry, hardly distinguishable from Hindu pantheism, and in the end it is said to have been extinguished by persecution. Why it failed in India, while it still rules the hearts of hundred of millions in Burma and the farther East, is perhaps the greatest of all tributes to the skill of brahmanical Hinduism in adapting itself to the needs of the Indian mind. There was a time at which it seemed as if one ruler, the Emperor Asoka, might consolidate the greater part of India into political unity under a common faith; but with his death the vision faded. Hinduism learned and borrowed from Buddhism, but discarded it and ultimately beat it down, as it did with Jainism and the many other protests of reform. Caste and *Karma* triumphed, as they believe that they will triumph to-day.

It was in the Ganges Valley that the welding together of Aryan and Dravidian was effected by that code of life which we know as brahmanical Hinduism. From there the system spread slowly into the southern

lands which Asoka never conquered: and in the Deccan, and Madras it found, as late as the Christian era, a Dravidian world advanced in civilization and organized into warring kingdoms. Of actual physical penetration the Aryan, whether of the pure or of the half-blood, did little, though we hear of Brahman colonies in the area. It was the doctrine that made its way into the Dravidian mind, and practically moulded a pure Dravidian people into the same social framework as had been devised for very different conditions. With the proverbial zeal of the recent convert, South India has adopted the Hindu framework more fervently than the land of its origin. Castes have been created: brahmans and rajputs have been manufactured wholesale,<sup>o</sup> without a drop of Aryan blood in their veins: and the communities which refused or were unable to come into the caste system have been stigmatized as untouchable, and treated with an arrogance which not only is unknown in Northern India, but is unsurpassed in any other social scheme now surviving in the civilized world.

While Hinduism was thus organizing society and religion throughout the land, India on the political plane was the scene of endless disruption. On the internecine wars in the north before the expedition of Alexander the Great, we have the evidence of the Epics: and in the Dravidian south the records are even more definite. With the Mauryan Dynasty something of an imperial nexus was established: but, with the downfall of the great Asoka's successors, chaos again broke out. Insurgents from the south attacked the imperial zone; and weakness on the north-west frontiers admitted one inroad after another from Persia and Central Asia. 'The attempt to make India a great world power had failed: and its history now

becomes a complex struggle within its own borders of elements both native and foreign, such as was to recur many centuries later on the downfall of the Mogul Empire.<sup>1</sup> During all this period of struggle, however, two movements continued unchecked and unswerving. The brahmanical framework of Hinduism was strengthened, cross-tied, and buttressed, whatever might be the regional or dynastic struggles within. And as to the invasions, whether the peaceful Mongoloid penetration on the east or the armed descent of Parthian, Scythian, or White Hun from the north-west, the residuum of settlement which they left on Indian soil was steadily and effectively sucked into the brahmanical ordering of social and religious life.

Hard and enduring though Hinduism had become before Buddhism disappeared, it was yet to pass through a fiery crucible, in order to emerge as the fine steel which it is to-day. That crucible was furnished by Islam. After some tentative attacks on the coast, the Mahomedan invasions became systematic about A.D. 1000. At first they were raids of blood and plunder. Later they developed into campaigns of annexation and settlement, into centuries of chaos and oppression culminating in the imperial sway of the Great Moguls. They differed from all previous and all subsequent invasions; for Islam was essentially a proselytizing faith. The Koran exhorts its followers to 'fight till opposition shall cease, and the religion becometh God's alone'. In India the injunction was obeyed for something like six centuries; and of the seventy million Moslems who inhabit it to-day no small proportion are descendants of Hindus who were converted to Islam by force or by the

<sup>1</sup> Professor Rapson in the *Cambridge History*, i. 517.

strongest self-interest. It was a steady, agonizing process, calming down at times, blazing into fury at others. The earlier annals reek with the blood of unrepentant infidels: Akbar brought peace: Aurangzeb reverted to ruthless persecution and wholesale conversion. In the later Empire all enthusiasms perished, and under British rule this particular type of enthusiasm was not encouraged; but the Moplah rising of 1921 reminded our present generation that the art is not extinct.

The ordeal was such as probably no other religion in the world but Hinduism would have survived. In many senses, however, its effect was disastrous. It put an end to all chances of internal reform and it hardened and exaggerated the purely defensive and materialistic side of Hinduism. Whether, with the final absorption of Buddhism, the time would have been ripe for shedding the archaic crust of Hinduism, it is now impossible to guess. There would seem to have been indications, in the rising cult of Vishnu, that men's minds were reaching out towards a kindlier incarnation, a loving God compassionate to human weaknesses. But all this crumbled under the direct attacks of Islam upon the whole tabernacle of the faith. Any softening of the doctrine of *Karma* was prohibited by the necessity for using the terrors of rebirth as a check on apostasy, compulsory or otherwise. And for similar reasons, in almost every direction, there was a stiffening of faith and practice. The Joint Family System, a device which in times of peace deadens individual effort and multiplies human parasites, became in troublous days an insurance against alien rapacity. The position of women deteriorated; the bonds of caste grew more rigid. On all sides Hinduism ossified in self-defence. Speculation on

the eternal verities flourished, for adversity often stimulates the philosophic mind. And some of the masterpieces of Hindu literature belong to these hard centuries. But the social structure and the cardinal doctrines of the system were far more unbending when the British replaced the Mogul than they had been 600 years earlier. It was on this rigidity that there then impinged, with an intellectual impact very different from the physical onset of Islam, the spirit of the West.

Before reviewing this new influence, let our minds dwell for a moment on the ethical triumphs of Hinduism throughout and despite the turbulence which brooded over India for at least 3,000 years before the British occupation. Its first and greatest triumph was in bridging the gulf between the early dark-skinned occupants of the land and the formidable invaders, of an entirely different human stock, who poured into India, it may have been for centuries, with a view to conquest and settlement. It then spread slowly into the southern lands, where conquest had not penetrated, and took into its capacious bosom a whole civilization which melted in its embrace. It next turned to the absorption of a new series of varied adventurers from across the borders, who broke up the only purely Hindu Empire in India's history. During all the conflicts which preceded the consolidation of that Empire and during the chaos of warring kingdoms which followed its downfall, Hinduism steadily increased its dominion over the minds and lives of men, to whatever camp they belonged. On the one hand, it established a minute and despotic rule over the daily routine of social relations; on the other, it developed a habit of intellectual research into the How and Why of



existence, for which there is no parallel elsewhere; while all the time it left the multitudes of its followers in a morass of ignorance and superstition. When its supreme trial came, it strengthened its discipline and tightened its hold over its people, so that for something like six centuries it resisted the fiercest proselytizing power in the world. From that struggle it emerged bruised and stunned, but undefeated. It emerged to find Islam established by its side in India, permanently hostile, but for the time a spent force. Though here it had failed, under sheer physical violence, in its tactics of absorption, it had vanquished all other rivals. It had drawn into its fold Aryan and Dravidian alike, the Mongoloid races which had drifted into the Ganges Valley from the east, the Parthian, Scythian, and Hun invaders from beyond the Himalayan screen, and—what was possibly its only missionary effort—it had climbed into the mountains of Nepal and enveloped the Gurkha Kingdom.

The progress of Hinduism is not without a certain similarity to the spread of Christianity over Europe. There also, in a world of grim ferocity, a priestly organization grew up to direct the spiritual side of life, and continued its work unabated through centuries of racial and dynastic strife. It brought into its fold a great variety of different peoples—Latin, Byzantine, Goth, Teuton, Norseman, and Gael. It conceded to its converts, though always with some change of form, the retention within their new religion of rites, traditions, festivals belonging to their more ancient faiths. Its ideal, which the Roman Church preserves, was a community which would transcend all national boundaries; and in a large measure it attained its object, even if it has not been generally successful in composing national animosities.

We cannot, however, push the parallel much farther. The community at which Hinduism aims is not a *Civitas Dei* but a highly complicated and stratified human society. The religion for its guidance is not a system of faith or belief, or even philanthropy (about which Hinduism cares little), but a close observance of ritual determined for every step in men's daily lives. Its object is not so much the well-being of men or the care of their souls, as the strength of the social strata, in which are involved the reward of right living and the penalties of wrong living. In maintaining the structure of society and in performing the ritual, the Brahman is indispensable. Consequently, in all circumstances must the position of the Brahman be respected. Whatever storm may rage on the ocean of Hinduism, the ark of Brahmanism must ride in safety.

## CHAPTER II

### HINDUISM AS A NATIONAL FORCE

DURING the long centuries of its formative period the trials and triumphs of Hinduism were associated with internal reform and external violence. It had not yet met the intellectual rivalry which is the progenitor of scepticism. With the decay of the Mogul Empire and the rise of British power, it had an entirely novel situation to face. The terrors of forcible conversion were over, but they were succeeded by the attractions of a new civilization. The approach was insidious; the earlier imports from the West were stimulating. They brought to India a glimpse of new commercial customs, of new systems of law, and ultimately—when missionaries received their begrudged licences to work in the country—of a new religion. None of these was enforced on her, and a healthy interest in them was consequently aroused. In Calcutta, the centre of the most emotional and artistic of the Indian peoples, this interest bore its firstfruits. A society for the reform of Hinduism, the Brahmo Samaj, was started in 1828 by a group of learned brahmans. It aimed at getting back to the Vedas, the primitive Sanskrit scriptures, and ridding Hinduism of many intermediate accretions. Bearing very definite marks of Christian influence, it soon encountered the hostility of Hinduism proper; and, though some of the most eminent Bengalis of the last century were its adherents, the sect now makes little headway and its energies are spent. More formidable, however, than any specific movement of reform was the spirit of curiosity and questioning which began to stir when English education was adopted as the policy of the

East India Company a century ago. The exact and experimental methods of Western science crashed into a realm of vague speculation. The teachings of the Utilitarian school, then in vogue in England, fell like a cleansing douche upon the musty mysticism of orthodox thought. Political doctrines of personal freedom and equal opportunities had all the fascination of a delightful heresy. There grew up a young school of educated Indians who received with genuine enthusiasm these breezes from the outer world.

At this point India suffered at the hand of destiny its most grievous blow in modern times—the Mutiny of 1857. How far this upheaval was what it professed to be, a military rising; how far it was a protest against the imperialistic policy of Dalhousie; or how far it sprang from a general reaction against the new spirit, still remains for the historian to decide. Whatever its causes, it left two deplorable sequels behind. On the one hand, racial bitterness was its legacy; the treachery and cruelty which characterized the outbreak poisoned the minds of Englishmen; the severity with which it was crushed evoked a parallel resentment in the Indian mind, at least in later years when the provocation was forgotten. On the other hand, the promise of a new Hinduism moulded by Christian influences was shattered. The thirst for Western education continued, but mainly as a passport to official and professional occupation rather than as a desirable thing in itself. And about 1870 a series of movements took shape in defence of the old faith and in direct antagonism to the attempts that had been made to reform it from within or from without. Chief among these was the Arya Samaj, a militant organization which, while disavowing caste and calling for a return to the simplicity of the Vedas, has concentrated on

attacks upon Christianity and Islam, and has adopted the mission of reclaiming converts to those religions back into Hinduism. Other movements were more orthodox: but the whole trend was a protest against the attractions of Western thought and the seductive freedom of its outlook.

This, however, somewhat anticipates the sequence of events. What we seem to see from the 'seventies of last century onwards is a steady march of India's fate along three lines. Most obvious was the forward movement in administration, the extension and elaboration of the machinery of efficient government by British officials. For half a century that process went on untiringly. Law-making, the strengthening of the magistracy, improvements in the police, the building up of a powerful Bar—all made for the securer enthronement of justice in the land. The establishment of universities, and the multiplying of colleges and schools, brought education to the doors of the people. The rapid expansion of railways, coupled with the construction of vast irrigation reservoirs and canals, increased the products of the land and enabled them to be mobilized, thus turning the flanks of those terrible famines which used to decimate the population. Material prosperity was enhanced, and all the executive paraphernalia of the modern State were imposed upon the country. This was the first and most impressive line of advance.

- The second line was somewhat parallel. It marked the magnetic influence of Western thought and ideals upon a small but notable section of the educated classes. It drew them into the study of utilitarian philosophy and of Christian ethics. It touched chords in them which vibrated to the liberty preached by Cobden, Gladstone, and John Bright in England. It

shook them out of their bondage to the rigid observances of orthodox Hinduism, especially when they crossed the ocean and left caste behind. And it set them speculating on political emancipation. It was a fine type, the dignified learned Hindu of that period, who was equally at home in the classics of his own faith and in the concepts of Western culture, and equally tolerant of both: but it has almost disappeared.

The third line of change ran an oblique course to the other two. It was in effect a revulsion against them. The old Hinduism was distrustful of the new outlook which British rule was bringing into men's minds and resentful of the defections of the younger generation. Recovering from the stunning blow of 1857, it began its long, patient, silent striving for the restoration of its dominion, of which we are witnessing some of the results to-day. The revival of orthodox Hinduism and its struggle against the menace of new thought are dominant features in the last half-century of India's psychology.

If, therefore, the reader of an ordinary text-book on Indian history between 1870 and 1900 were to classify his impressions, he would note three outstanding facts. First, there was the rapid development of the administrative system under the direction of a handful of British officials, with practically no guidance from the British Parliament. It was marked by many mistakes, by sometimes misreading and often treading upon the susceptibilities of Oriental thought and etiquette, but, nevertheless, it was a record of great achievement, directed at improving the prospects and happiness of a vast population, and endowing them with justice and peace. Second, the reader would observe the increasing number of young Indians

(mostly Hindus) who were endeavouring to translate into practice the theories with which Western education was making them familiar. They were crowding to Europe and America in search of further knowledge and technical instruction, and defying the ceremonial impurity with which old-fashioned Brahmanism punished those who crossed the ocean. They were seeking a modest share in the management of public affairs. They were training themselves in the arts of political agitation. In the third place, our inquirer would have been puzzled by strange symptoms of reaction. The vernacular Press of Bengal broke into an orgy of slanderous attacks upon the Government and its individual officers, reaching a point of seditious vehemence which necessitated a special law for the control of the Press in 1878. Alongside of this, there sprang up a number of organizations devoted to the revival of orthodox Hinduism in its full rigidity, and so comprehensive in their objections to innovation that they assailed even such modest reformers as the Arya Samaj. Later, a highly intelligent section of Brahmans (the Chitpawans of Bombay) led a campaign of attack upon the Government for its policy generally, focusing particularly on its measures for raising the age of consent, and subsequently on its drastic attempts to check the bubonic plague. The assaults were driven home by appeals to Hindu heroes and legend, and they culminated in the assassination in 1897 of two British plague officers—the first of the long series of similar crimes which history will record.

The chief concerted effort of the advanced thinkers in this last quarter of the nineteenth century was the foundation of an annual conference for the discussion of their political aspirations. It met first, and baptized

itself the National Congress, in 1885. To that date, accordingly, is frequently ascribed the birth of Nationalism in India. Other authorities believe that the awakening came when Japan beat Russia and young India was dazzled by the thought that Asia had mastered Europe in war; while still others attribute the new spirit to the storm aroused when Lord Curzon divided Bengal into two separate administrative units. These are harmless fancies, but the birth of widespread movements is not so easily dated as the zeal of the historian sometimes suggests. Although the Congress of 1885 adopted the designation of National to show that its members came from all parts of India, the conception which inspired it at its start was not, in the Western sense of the word, a Nationalist movement. Yet to the Congress and to its offshoots, as time has gone on, have gradually attached both the methods and the reputation of such a movement, and the analogy requires examination.

Nationalism is a word which many writers have striven, if never yet with complete success, to define; but there is an apparent consensus that it involves a sentiment of unity in race or language or religion, or some combination of the three. As we shall see later, there is not, and cannot be, any unity of race or language in India to-day; but what of religion? Is not Hinduism, it may be asked, the religion of the great majority of Indians? The answer is that Hinduism of the orthodox brahmanical type is not wholly religious, just as it is not wholly racial or wholly political. It is a comprehensive system of life and thought which has taken 4,000 years to reach its present shape, and which has developed on lines widely at variance with Western thought and culture. There have been revolts against it, and attempts to



reform it; but it has lived them down, taking whatever suited it from each, and gaining in strength with each revival. Meanwhile, the country has been torn by every conceivable form of dissension within itself, which Hinduism has done little or nothing directly to assuage; nevertheless, through all the agonies and disruptions of history, one constant influence has been at work, the influence of Brahmanism and caste. At intervals and for lengthened periods, the country has been pressed into a common mould by alien government; but the result has been a hardening of the tissues and a toughening of the crust of the traditional and enduring social system. Dynasties have risen and fallen; kingdoms have been formed and dissolved; invasions have swept the land; centripetal and centrifugal forces have alternated; but one power has grown through it all—that power over men's minds and lives which is inherent in brahmanical Hinduism. And it is the threat to which it is exposed from the sceptical and analytical forces of Western culture that has driven it into the open now, to consolidate, inspire, and employ for its own uses all those diverse emotions and activities which Nationalism arouses in modern lands. With what success it has hitherto been attended is a question that calls for careful scrutiny if we are to estimate accurately the character of the Indian problem; and that scrutiny will be attempted later.

At the moment, the argument does not go beyond this, that in Hinduism there reposes the real National power in India to-day. It follows that the battalions which face the British administration, calling themselves the army of Indian Nationalism, are in reality the forces of Hinduism: the sentiment which the Indian extremist claims as a subjective nationality is

the sentiment and tradition of the orthodox Hindu. The power and the sentiment have a reality, an intensity, a dominion to which there is nothing at all comparable in the modern world: but they have not that binding force which welds nations into solid units of fervent patriotism. What we call the Nationalism of India to-day, and must continue to call by that name for want of a better one, is something radically different from, to take three familiar types, the nationalism of England under Queen Elizabeth, or of Italy under Garibaldi, or of Czechoslovakia under Masaryk. It is not the movement of a people united by some common danger or intolerable burden or all-consuming ideal—a movement driving them forward to a form of political organization which will enable them to express themselves or to achieve their common purpose. It is rather the revolt of a privileged class against modern influences which are threatening its social predominance. It is the struggle of an ancient civilization, which in its time has drawn into itself many races and many cultures, to stem the advance of its most dangerous rival, the power of Western civilization and liberty. There are aspects of the movement which command admiration; there are others with which it is possible to sympathize, or which at least it is possible to understand. There is also much disguising of it by fantasies of artificial sentiment and false analogy, as well as often by the gravest mis-statements; and all those unrealities have to be got rid of before the world can face the peculiar complexity underlying the demands which are now being pressed in the name of Indian Nationalism.

To get down to realities and find clues in the complexity, we need not waste time in asking when and under what goading the powers of orthodox Hinduism

first took up political weapons. A far more vital question is the driving force behind the movement which they initiated, and closely akin to this is the case which it presents for the sympathy of the outside world. So far as these two harmonize, the movement has the strength of sincerity; where they diverge it has the weakness of artificiality. On the ultimate foundation of the movement, Hinduism itself, it is impossible to dilate.<sup>c</sup> Libraries have been written to describe it; yet, just as no man who is not born a Hindu can ever become one, so can no outsider ever arrive at a complete understanding of the system. It is based essentially on three loyalties, loyalty to a man's caste, to his family, and to himself. His loyalty to his caste obliges him never to marry a woman who is not of his caste, never to break bread except with a caste-fellow, and at all times to accept the decision of a caste tribunal in any case of caste rules or etiquette; but to these three primary obligations is added a complex code of rules and practices which it takes a lifetime to acquire. Loyalty to the family entails in many cases community of goods, and in all cases an obligation to participate in ceremonials to the spirits of ancestors. Loyalty to himself requires a man to observe an endless tale of petty ritual and an equally endless list of petty prohibitions at every turn of his daily life. Without the help of the brahman he may often go wrong; and every uncorrected error goes to his debit in the great ledger of his *Karma* and affects the tenement which his soul will occupy in its next birth. Add to all these obligations the grave regard which is paid to omens and portents, to the malevolence of unknown powers, and the need for propitiating them. The result is an over-occupied and whimsically regulated life, with no sureness of

touch anywhere and little room for what we call happiness. Hindus and their Western admirers are fond of claiming that their life is spiritual while ours is material. It is true that their life is infinitely more related to extra-human agencies than ours. It is also true that the orthodox Hindu spends more time in prayer than the average Christian; but the observer is often tempted to ask whether spirituality consists of constantly engineering the future of one's own soul by the help of unintelligible rules, and in complete disregard of the fate of one's neighbour either in his soul or in his body. This, however, is a diversion from the political aspects of Hinduism.

Another basic factor of prime importance in the movement is the fervent Oriental sentiment of personal dignity. This is, in the individual, something quite different from, for example, the Western notion of self-respect; for the most indifferent character will tenaciously claim it, even after being convicted of lying, meanness, immorality, or crime. Nor, from our practice, is it properly described as dignity; for an Indian retains it however undignified his position or his role or even his motives. It is an intangible sentiment which is wounded by many things which would not impair our self-respect, and is immune to others which we should regard with dread. It is very tender to ridicule, to verbal abuse, and to slights, even if unintentional. It is the dearest possession of the poor man, as well as the rich. Once impaired, it is difficult to restore; and an assault upon it is often the cause of a lifelong vendetta. This particular sentiment has recently been given a wide extension which the Simon Commission describe as 'the claim of the East for due recognition of status'. There is possibly no complication so potent as the application of a

purely personal and individualistic conception to the community and its translation into a sort of race-consciousness.

This newly developed sense of racial dignity ushers us into the emotional side of Hindu Nationalism. To a people whose supreme literary pleasure, even in the unlettered villages, is to listen for hours to readings from the ancient Sanskrit epics, there is no appeal comparable to that of the Golden Age which their bards wove into heroic verse. Most nations look back to a golden age which probably never existed. For the Hindu peasant the India of the Epics was peopled by gods and demigods in human guise; the forces of nature were powerless before the asceticism of man, and hostile forces were annihilated by a single thunderbolt. With greater modesty, brahman commentators assure us that none of the miracles of modern science was unfamiliar to their ancestors, from the aeroplane to the atom. Having inherited our more exact researches into Indian history, the modern school point to the glories of the Emperor Asoka, who ruled a vast empire and maintained a brilliant court centuries before the greater part of Europe emerged from barbarism. It is not only the imperial splendours of the Guptas or the Mauryas or the Kushans that swell the pride of the Indian patriot to-day. He recalls the monuments of philosophy and speculation in which his ancient literature abounds, and it is to him no small solace that they were enriching the world of thought at a time when the alien race which now rules his country had not emerged from its primitive dwellings in cave and forest.

From the emotional to the intellectual aspect of the movement is but a short step. Upon taking it, we find ourselves again in the argument that Hinduism

is spiritual and Christianity materialistic. Mr. Gandhi symbolizes it with his spinning-wheel; let man's needs be confined to those which he can supply with his own hands, and the simplicity of his life will leave his mind free to commune with the Infinite. R. N. Tagore plays on the same conception. India, he says, has 'tried to live peacefully and think deeply; her one ambition being to know this world as of soul, to live here every moment of her life in the meek spirit of adoration, in the glad consciousness of an eternal and personal relation with it'. Turning to the culture of the West, his note changes:

We have seen this great stream of civilization choking itself from debris carried by its innumerable channels. We have seen that, with all its vaunted love of humanity, it has proved itself the greatest menace to man, far worse than the sudden outbursts of nomadic barbarism from which men suffered in the early ages of history. We have seen that, in spite of its boasted love of freedom, it has produced worse forms of slavery than ever were current in earlier societies—slavery whose claims are unbreakable, either because they are unseen or because they assume the names and appearance of freedom. We have seen, under the spell of its gigantic sordidness, man losing faith in all the heroic ideals of life which have made him great.

The indictment is grave, but it is seriously accepted by many earnest people, both in India and elsewhere. To Christianity in the abstract the reasonable Hindu takes no exception. It interests him, as all pacific religions do. True, its mystical side makes little impression upon him, as he has far more startling miracles and mysteries of his own. On its ethical side there is much to which he gives only an academic assent; but its ascetic and emotional sides touch responsive chords in his nature, and he is often a close

student of the Bible. The chief result of this, however; is that it enables him to cogitate on the wide divergence between Christianity and the life and practice of Christian nations. If anything was wanting to point this moral, it was provided by the Great War; and since 1914 there has been a marked weakening of intellectual sympathy with us, a rallying to the claim of the spiritual superiority of the East. The West has dangled before us, cries the Hindu, philosophies and a religion which it pretended were better than ours; they had features, it must be admitted, which at first blush attracted us; but neither their philosophies nor their religion have availed to prevent the nations of the West from flying at each other like wild creatures, and from perpetrating bloodshed and destruction more terrible than anything in our history. In such thoughts India finds no small consolation for the racial and cultural arrogance which Europe has too often shown towards her.

Thus there is much on which the pride of Hinduism can feed—its storied past, its profundity of abstract thought, its aloofness from the modern hustle, its 'white robe of humility', in Tagore's phrase, amid the grime of competitive industrialism. The naked ascetic, who sits by the Ganges with no possession in the world but his begging-bowl and lives on a few handfuls of grain a day, regards the rich man who motors past him with a mixture of dislike, compassion, and scorn. Not dissimilar is the attitude of orthodox Hinduism to Western life, save that it now finds the position too critical for merely passive disapproval, and it has to arm its forces with sharper weapons than those of the intellect or the emotions. Its spear-head is the economic appeal, and here its drive is the universal pressure of India's economic needs. Grievances

abound, real as well as imaginary; and even the most impartial observer finds it at times difficult to discriminate between those which are genuine and those which are artificial; but let us hear how the intelligent Hindu presses this side of his case when he argues against the continuance of British rule.

India our motherland, he says, was once the home of flourishing arts and industries. Her craftsmen met all the requirements of a contented people, and their products were sought for in the markets of the world—their calicoes and taffetas, their choice silks and brocades. All this is now changed. Under an alien rule, the cottage industries have been ruined or degraded; no longer do India's handicrafts command the admiration of Europe. It is not the surplus products of her arts which are now exported, but the harvests of her soil. In this way the food of the people is leaving the country, to its permanent impoverishment. In this way also the materials of her industries are being torn from her. She tries to grow cotton and oilseed, to dig manganese and so on, in order only that other countries may convert them into manufactured products which they sell to India. She is thus doubly exploited, for she loses both the employment and experience of manufacture, as well as its profits. She has been reduced, in a phrase which is constantly in use, to a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for other nations. All this, our critic goes on to complain, is due to a deliberate and malevolent purpose. Britain objects to India developing as an industrial power, lest she should learn to compete in Britain's markets. Britain wants her raw materials to feed its own factories, while it finds in her its best customer for their output. Her industrial progress is thus designedly retarded, and until quite recently she



was forbidden a fiscal system which would encourage indigenous enterprise. As a classic example of this selfishness is cited the unhappy decision by which for many years she was, in practice, prevented from including in an otherwise general tariff certain cotton goods which used to be exclusively imported from Lancashire.

Such is the generic accusation of economic exploitation, raging as it does against the foreign capitalist, and wholly oblivious of the difficulties which have constantly arisen in finding capital, except from abroad, for the development of Indian enterprises, whether State or private. To this complaint two minor grievances are usually appended. India, it is alleged, pays an indefensible tribute to Britain, and Indians get less than their fair share of the 'loaves and fishes' of public life in their own land. The second charge explains itself. It cannot be pleasant to see a succession of foreigners imported to fill the most dignified and remunerative of India's public offices. The same thing does not happen in the professions, which are often more remunerative than the public services; and the ratio of Indians recruited for all departments of the State has been largely raised in recent years; nevertheless, the salaries paid by India to her alien administrators are capable of being an irritant, especially to those who refuse to believe that such functionaries need exist. The complaint of the tribute or 'drain' is an old story, of which less is heard now than in the earlier days of the Nationalist movement. It rests on a misunderstanding of the reasons why India, through her trade balances, habitually makes considerable remittances to London for payments which yield no direct commercial return. They are attacked as being a tribute wrung from India. In reality, they are devoted

to meeting a variety of national obligations, of which the chief is the interest on that part of the Indian public debt which was raised abroad. Next come payments for railway material and other stores imported on government account and not appearing in the trade returns. Then follow pensions and the like to officials, military and civil, and a number of minor charges which would all be passed by a court of international audit.

More serious, however, than these complaints is the unquestionable severity of the burden which her national defence imposes upon India. The severity lies, not in the cost of the army per head of population, which is low, but in the fact that the military charges absorb fully a quarter of the total central and provincial revenues; and the moral is the urgent need for improving the revenues. For, although saving might be effected, if saving were the only consideration, by replacing the British element (about one-third of the total) in the army by cheap local material, yet it is doubtful if the present strength of the forces could safely be reduced much below their present figure of 220,000 men. There is a fiery frontier to be guarded on the north-west, with 120,000 tribesmen lying across it, armed to the teeth and always liable to pounce. There are danger-points of fanaticism and communal strife scattered up and down a vast and densely populated land; and there is nowhere, as yet, that readiness of the people to rally in support of law and order which makes military force so rarely necessary in Western countries. For its professional protection at sea, India pays nothing but an annual contribution of £100,000 (half a million dollars) to the British Navy.

### CHAPTER III

#### HINDUISM AND NATIONHOOD

A POINT has now been reached at which it is possible, and may be convenient, to review in a few sentences the brief that is held against the British control of India by the advocates of that vast indigenous power which is described, in many respects incorrectly and in no respect adequately, as Nationalism, but which we have seen to be orthodox Hinduism. On the outer pages of the bill of indictment we see mottoes about freedom being the birthright of man, self-determination, the government of the people by the people for the people, and many of the other passwords of ordinary democracy. They are useful texts for fervent oratory, to impress an outer world which has no time to get behind them and form its own conclusions. On a second set of pages is a flood of accusations of misgovernment, spoliation, tyranny, brutality against the British administration and its officers. These are manufactured largely for export to potential sympathizers abroad, and are not meant to be seriously pressed where the facts are known. Then comes the substantial part of the brief, with its three-fold appeal, emotional, intellectual, and economic, to young India itself and, through young India, by appropriate methods of presentation, to an even wider audience. But behind these glowing pages is a part of the roll which the advocate does not ordinarily unfold for the world's eye. It describes the radical difference between the Hindu and the Western theories of life, the insurmountable aversion of an ancient theocracy to modern ideals of liberty and equality.

Let us now put away the brief and turn to some of

the features which differentiate Hinduism as a power from the ordinary type of Nationalism, with a view to considering later how far those differences are likely to hinder India or to deflect her from the path of political progress which she might normally be expected to follow. This line of thought leads immediately to a chapter in the tale which has for some time been overdue. We have hitherto been talking almost exclusively about Hinduism: are we forgetting that, alongside the 240 millions of Hindus in India, there are nearly 70 millions of Mahomedans? What part do they play in the peculiar type of Nationalism which we seem to have been ascribing to India as a whole?

Conquest and conversion have left the Moslems very unevenly distributed over the land. Up in the north-west, they are still the dominant people, sturdy swashbucklers as of old, grey-eyed and virile as those sons of Anak, their kinsmen across the frontier. In the Punjab they are about equal in numbers with the Hindus and Sikhs combined—a fine peasantry with military leanings and gallant traditions. Down the Ganges Valley, they thin off in numbers, though they still carry their heads high. And in the rest of India they tend to get scarcer as we move south, except for one vast area in eastern Bengal, where we find about 20 millions of them, mostly local converts in origin, clinging to their ancient lands, with a poor standard of living. Taken generally, and except for their concentration in the far north-west, the Mahomedans are freely interspersed among their Hindu neighbours. No city or town is exclusively Moslem; and in the villages, though they tend to form into groups of their own, their dispersal is considerable. With their neighbours the Hindus they continue as a rule

to live in reasonable amity; but every now and again, with the shortest notice, there breaks out a fury of anger and excitement, sometimes from one side, sometimes from the other; bricks are thrown, bludgeons twirl, heads are broken, and the whole fabric of local friendliness topples over. Unless the tumult is encouraged or allowed to spread, the law can pretty quickly be enforced: the feud is generally patched up with amusing speed, and life goes on as before, though with an added notch in the tally of memories which always prevent a lasting peace.

If the problem concerned only the unsophisticated villager, it would present little complexity. Its difficulty grows as we move up the social scale, and gets accentuated in the towns. The middle-class Hindu, especially of the twice-born castes, is never comfortable with his Mahomedan neighbours, whom he regards as rude in their manners and unclean in their customs. The Moslem on his side does not forget that he represents a race which once ruled over the Hindus with a rod of iron, and he is apt to assert an importance which his present circumstances do not justify. He is also unable to conceal his contempt for the Hindu as an idolater. This is, of course, a statement in general terms, for cases abound of close and lasting affection between individual Hindu and Mahomedan gentlemen; but the normal attitude is not one of mutual cordiality, so that, when conflict arises, it is unrestrained. For conflict, unhappily, the occasions are numerous.

Two of these occasions are always present, though of recent years they have assumed a disproportionate importance. One occurs at the special period in the year, prolonged for several months, when Hindu marriages are blessed by the stars. At such times, floods

of marriage processions circumambulate every town in India, to the accompaniment of noisy songs or strident instrumental music; and every now and then in sheer wantonness a procession will halt and redouble its gaiety outside a mosque in which Moslems are at prayer. The worshippers swarm out to remonstrate. Angry words are exchanged; then out come cudgels, and in a twinkling the whole quarter is ablaze. The other periodic occasion provides the Moslems with opportunity for retaliation. It comes once a year, when the faithful are required to celebrate the anniversary of Abraham's sacrifice in Mount Moriah. In other Islamic countries the commemorative sacrifice is a camel or, among poorer celebrants, a goat. But in India there is a tradition which fastens upon the cow as its choice victim. Several families will club together and buy a cow for the purpose, rather than offer up goats of their own; and any miserable starving creature will serve. Now, the cow is particularly sacred to the Hindu, and the Moslems' insistence on selecting it is due, not only to its cheapness, but partly at least to a certain 'cussedness', for there is no other word to express the impish joy with which the Hindus are habitually baited. The animal is garlanded and led noisily and ostentatiously through quarters occupied by pious Hindus to the place of sacrifice. Before it gets there, a gang of infuriated Hindus collect with staves and attempt its rescue. Fighting ensues, and again the trouble spreads like wildfire. Such are the prosaic and vexatious disturbances, standardized by long practice, with which the religious sore is kept open. In nine cases out of ten, the magistrate interferes, or the police tactfully shepherd the mischief-makers out of harm; but the tenth case, in which preventive measures are eluded, is

always happening, and the most strenuous efforts at conciliation achieve no permanent result. It sounds very puerile; but the British district officer, who has lived through ten or twenty years of it, can testify to the hopelessness of ending it.

Behind all this skirmishing lie graver economic causes of trouble. The Mahomedans are out-manœuvred and outpaced in the struggle for life and power by the Hindus. They know it; they resent it; and they are convinced in their hearts that the Hindus mean to eat them up. In the villages, the Mahomedan peasant is almost invariably in debt to some Hindu neighbour: he can never pay off his obligations, and remains virtually in lifelong serfdom on his mortgaged lands. Among the professional and official classes, his subtlety and nimbleness of brain carries the Hindu far ahead, and the prizes go accordingly. In the race for education and, through it, for appointments under Government, the Mahomedans were a generation later in starting than the Hindus, and they are never likely to make up the distance. Far from deficient in intelligence or initiative, they are handicapped by a lack of application, and their minds are jaundiced by a sense of their own ineffectiveness and the bitterness of a lost prestige. In the generous years of youth, Hindu and Moslem are often the best of friends: and on neutral ground, as when travelling abroad, the well-bred Hindu and Mahomedan show no social disparity. Back in their own country, however, they relapse into their own camps; and the rift opens as soon as they get into competition for a living, preferment, or power. And it gapes its widest when the question of political ascendancy arises.

On this aspect of the problem, a brief excursion into recent history is necessary. The Mutiny put an

end to whatever lingering hopes the Moslems may ever have cherished of recovering their imperial power: and during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when we saw Hinduism repairing the breaches in its walls, Islam sat coldly aloof. Its great leader of those days, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, would have no concern in the Congress movement and spurred his people to pursue education as the path to advancement, and to trust for favourable treatment from the British Government. Too many of them interpreted this as preferential treatment, which they did not get, and they began to look about for some bulwark against the growing power of the Hindu in politics. When the first forward move (to be subsequently discussed as the Morley-Minto reforms) was being incubated in 1906, the Moslem leaders of the day presented a demand that, in consideration of their special position and history, any electoral system of the future should guarantee to the Moslem community certain privileges, including the right of voting, outside the general electorate, on a communal roll of their own, for their own representatives in the legislature. This right remains, tenaciously cherished by the Moslems; and no device for replacing it by a more democratic system has yet been discovered. Here is a momentous and definite move away from Hinduism as a Nationalist cause.

In place of the security which they had now hoped to enjoy, there followed for the Mahomedans an anxious and unhappy time. Their fallen estate in India had drawn them to seek solace in a closer association with the Islamic world outside, especially with Turkey, which had the twofold credential of being a traditional ally of England and the greatest surviving temporal power under the Crescent. The attachment



was always one-sided, as Turkey never showed any particular interest in its Indian co-religionists; but that seemed of little moment. Consequently when, during the wave of imperialistic activity in Europe, Islam began to suffer, the hearts of Indian Moslems were sorely smitten. Italy's attacks on Tripoli were keenly felt: so was the annexation by Austria of Bosnia and Herzegovina: and the gloomiest apprehensions were entertained of the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire by the Christian powers, which Britain was apparently doing nothing to restrain. A strong anti-British feeling thus grew up among the younger generation, and even among the cooler heads there was little concealment of their tendency to consider themselves Moslems first and Indians afterwards; in other words, to acknowledge a loyalty to the world-empire of Islam which took precedence of their allegiance to the British Empire. There was at this stage no trend towards a *rapprochement* with Hinduism.

This came later, owing to the Great War. That the entry of Turkey into the war on the side of our enemies was her doing, and not Britain's, seemed an argument of little account. What mattered was that the old alliance was at an end. Its close brought the campaign in Mesopotamia, and this was abhorrent to many a Moslem in India, involving, as it did, bloodshed in the Holy Places of Irak. While there was no formal protest, the more advanced Mahomedan leaders were turning towards the directing spirits of the Hindu movement, and at Christmas 1916, in conclave at Lucknow, the Moslem League, which had become the political organ of Mahomedan discontent, virtually united with the National Congress in demands for the concession of wider measures of self-government. Subsequently, the two bodies got so close

together as to agree on the ratio of seats in each provincial legislature which the two communities would reserve for each other upon the consummation of the home-rule campaign. But the pendulum was to swing still farther. With the Bolshevik *coup d'état* came the revelation of the secret treaty by which Britain had covenanted to let Russia take Constantinople. To the Indian Mahomedan this was convincing proof of British perfidy, and when it was followed by the Treaty of Sèvres, Britain was made to appear as the destroyer of Turkey and the implacable enemy of Islam. The storm broke.

It was the moment when Mr. Gandhi was developing his first campaign of civil disobedience and non-violent non-co-operation. The Khilafatists, or young Moslems who had banded themselves together by an oath to restore the Caliph of Islam to his ancient state, rushed to Mr. Gandhi's side and offered him their sword. On his accepting it, the Indian Moslem was thus for the first time in active alliance with the Hindu extremist against the British Government. No one who knew anything of their temperaments ever imagined that Gandhi the dreamer and the fiery Khilafat leaders could be happy bedfellows for long; in the event, non-violence was too slow a creed for the latter, and the union soon dissolved. Meanwhile, the flame of the Khilafat movement, flickering across the continent, touched a mass of combustible fanaticism on the Malabar coast, where an ancient colony of Arab blood, the Moplahs, burst into open rebellion. They overthrew, without difficulty for the moment, the slender British machinery; but their fury turned, primarily and at once, upon their Hindu neighbours. Fire and sword swept the countryside; the Hindus were given the choice of death or conversion to Islam; their

women were violated, and no indignity was spared them. It was the latest example on any considerable scale of how the slumbering communal antagonism may develop if control is weakened.

By this episode the enthusiasm of the Hindu extremists for their new allies was effectively damped; and at the same time the Khilafat leaders were beginning to realize that they were only pawns in a larger game. In this they were confirmed when, stung by strongly repeated challenges to produce some picture of the new India for which they were calling, the Congress school drafted a constitution in which the Moslems found themselves allotted no adequate place. With a return of their usual practical common sense, they smelt danger in the plans of the extremists for boycotting the Simon Commission. To supplement these considerations of prudence, came the still more powerful influence of events in Turkey. The Caliph, whom they had sworn to defend against his foes, had been betrayed by his own household and dethroned by the people of his own faith. Constantinople had been abandoned, and some of the most cherished traditions of Islam violated, by its own followers. The Khilafat movement and its purpose had become ridiculous, and the Indian Moslems were left apparently the only faithful followers of the Prophet in a topsy-turvy world. The recoil from the Hindu alliance was now in full swing, and a number of scattered conflicts between the two communities, in Bombay and elsewhere, have clinched the breakdown of what was never a serious accommodation.

This digression into recent events helps to indicate the difficulty of working the Moslems into any scheme of Nationality of which the keynote is Hinduism.

The pan-Islamic dream has faded, like all other dreams that have ever beckoned the Moslems to a higher allegiance outside India; and at the present moment they are busy with schemes for improving the separatist position which the Simon Commission has found itself compelled to allow them, reconciling themselves to citizenship of India, but on their own terms and not in accordance with the ordinary tenets of democratic equality. Behind all this political manœuvring, however, are the stern facts of economic strife, of communal discord, and of fanaticism. There is an immense task before the country in the removal of those obstacles to real Nationhood by the slow solvent of education and the gradual elevation of the ideals of citizenship above the conflict of sectional interests.

Before Hinduism can invest itself with the full functions of the Nationalism which at present it imperfectly represents, it has a difficult road to travel. Although the Moslem problem bestrides the path in gloomy insistence, it is not the only hindrance. There are other minority communities, and every concession that is made to Mahomedan separatism encourages similar demands from a variety of lesser aspirants. The Sikhs, though friendly on the whole to Hinduism, are tenacious of their traditions as a martial and conquering race, and will not readily subside into a general electorate. The depressed or Untouchable classes have not yet found their political feet; but their agelong exclusion from orthodox Hinduism has left them with a bitterness which will impede national unity. These, however, and several smaller minorities may in time become converts to the spread of a true national spirit; and it serves no good purpose to magnify their claims. A much greater obstacle

to nationhood is the immense diversity of racial elements within orthodox Hinduism itself.

As we have seen, Hinduism has handled its diverse races in its own way, after a fashion to which history affords no exact parallel; but it has not suppressed, or ever conceived of suppressing, the diversity, and even in the most powerful days of Hinduism the diversity was constantly asserting itself. The Mahrattas, for example, were capable of overrunning the Hindu peoples of Northern India with revolting cruelty; and in this year of grace it cannot be pretended that the Sikhs have any special tenderness for the Bengalis, or the Rajputs with their Scythian blood for the Dravidian races of the peninsula. Not only have they no traditions or interests in common, but they speak entirely different languages—a simple fact of which the importance is often foolishly depreciated. For the variety is not the sort of linguistic cleft which separates France from Spain or Germany from Holland: it is the gulf which parts two nations using different alphabets. And there are not two alphabets in India, but at least a dozen, totally and radically distinct. This obstacle to communication of ideas is enormous. A traveller can plough his way through India with the help of English, which is widely understood in the south, and of a bastard kind of Urdu, which is generally followed in the north; but it is only the merest superficialities of life which can be met in this manner, and away from the towns and the railways neither of these mediums would be understood. There has been talk of making a pure Hindi (a Sanskritic vernacular with literary traditions) into a *lingua franca*, and enthusiasts will romance about the ease with which it could be assimilated. Very little, however, has been done in this direction,

mainly for the reason that the small minority interested in nationalist activities can exchange their ideas in English. It is true, of course, that the international problems of Europe, for example, can be handled without serious linguistic difficulty in conferences at Geneva. But the domestic problems of a national government involve far more detailed and popular intervention than is provided by the Geneva model; and for such intervention there is at present no medium in India. It is a great and genuine impediment to the growth of nationhood and its work.

## CHAPTER IV

### NATIONALISM AND PROGRESS

It is now time to turn from the past to the future. We have seen how Hinduism grew and expanded and buttressed itself through the many centuries that have passed since the Indo-Aryan invaders first devised a scheme of social interdicts against the mingling of their blood with that of the older India. Into the foundations of this unique structure were pressed the superstitions and veneration of the more ancient races. Embedded in its walls is a wealth of material borrowed, not only from reforming agencies within, but also from many a hostile power without. Its builders have been that incomparable line of theocrats, the Brahmins; and their cement has been the institution of Caste. Its pinnacles vanish from sight in clouds of mysticism, but soar beyond into the higher airs of daring speculation on the unknown and unknowable. And in its many mansions it has made room for one race after another of invaders and conquerors, until the inroads of Islam forced it to close its doors and darken its windows. Such is the fortress from which the movements of to-day are directed.

Amid all the chaos and conflict of India's history, Hinduism has been the one constant force in the country's life and cultural vicissitudes. Its power has lain, not in political organization, nor even in religious organization, but in guiding men's daily lives and giving them a standard of authority which is independent of temporal changes. The economist may deplore some of its teachings, the Christian others; modern thought may pour scorn upon its science, as Macaulay did on its traditions; and in its practical

results there is much that is indefensible. But the fact remains that it gives many millions of simple and uncritical people an accommodation to life. It averts the visitations of unseen malice of which they are ever in dread. It reconciles them to the harshness of Nature in a tropical climate, and the cruelty of man in places of power. It provides them with safe formulas for action in times of crisis. It offers some prospects of recompense for adversity in another birth. It does all this, as well as constituting something that is stable in a world which they are taught to regard as a scene of flux and illusion. Consequently, it has the firmest hold on their affections. There is many a gibe and grumble at the Brahman and his petty exactions and his omniscience; but there is no getting through life without him. He on his side knows this; and he would be less than human if he did not use his immense power for the strengthening and preservation of his order. ♣

In that effort he has never yet failed. Buddhism was his greatest menace; but at its best Buddhism suffered from the weaknesses of a negative creed; and it was only a revolt of the Brahman's own people which he lived down by drawing out of it all that was hard and durable. The other threats to Hinduism rested on physical force, which its subtlety has always enabled it to survive. In all its earlier history, thanks mainly to geographical isolation, it never encountered the *zeitgeist* of the outer world, which has shaken ancient institutions elsewhere. Thus, when the impact of Western thought at last arrived in the train of British occupation, it came as a new, insidious danger, challenging the very axioms of the Hindu system and requiring new weapons to repel it. For a time, no weapons came to hand; the instinct of repulse was



strong, but action was paralysed. The Mutiny of 1857, the restless vigour of administrative progress thereafter, the popularity of new forms of justice and of new vistas of material prosperity, the wonders of science and the attractions of scepticism—all held the hand that would strike for orthodoxy. Rumblings of discontent had long been audible. Blended with economic distress, they broke out into occasional and spasmodic violence; but public, effective, and organized revolt had to bide its time until the British administration, uncritical in its trust in the tenets of democracy, embarked on political reform.

From the flowing tide of political reform arose the Excalibur for which Hinduism had blindly been searching; it was seized upon with an alacrity and employed with a skill which will always remain one of Hinduism's most brilliant achievements. This new and unfamiliar weapon was an appeal for the constitutional forms to which the West pins its faith, and its use, once those forms were secured, was to shake off the incubus of Western influences. As simple in its conception as it was daring, the plan was wholly in accord with the traditions of Hinduism, a system which has always taken freely, from rebel or rival, whatever would serve its own purpose, and ruthlessly rejected or suppressed what would not. But to the new weapon of political agitation destiny was soon to add further equipment for the fray, in the shining armour of self-determination. Along with many other products of the Great War, this militant invention swept rapidly across the globe; and, reaching Asia, it developed, in Sir John Simon's phrase, into the 'claim of the East for due recognition of status'. Here was a godsend to Hinduism, a claim which promised to be irresistible; for how could India be refused what

the conscience of the world had conceded to the smallest of European nations?

Self-determination, however, implied some sentiment of Nationhood; and to this necessity also Hinduism quickly adapted itself. It could not point to racial unity, or to unity of language or of religion, or to the less tangible unities of tradition and emotion which sometimes replace and often supplement the others. But it could claim to be a system of life and thought which dominates the minds of the great majority of Indians to-day; and on the strength of this claim it launched the movement which it describes as Nationalism. Of this name the world at large has shown no inclination to be critical. For beneath the agitation the casual observer seems to espy certain political and economic grievances not unlike those which fan the flame of self-determination in other countries; and amid the noisy vehemence that accompanies the movement he hears little of the discord within. Thus have the uneven ranks of our nationalistic world opened for the reception of Hindu India.

Nevertheless, the task which now lies before India is to exchange the borrowed armour of Nationalism for the panoply of Nationhood. Rarely has a graver task faced any people on the earth's surface, and the sketch that follows is meant to indicate some of its difficulties. They are not set down in malice. Indian susceptibilities are tender, and it is not unnatural that criticism should be resented when the critic has had opportunities which have never been vouchsafed to his victim. Criticism, however, is not involved in considering the connexion between Nationalism and progress, in estimating the material upon which the nationalist spirit, when it comes to have full play, will

be expected to operate. Nor is there any intention of touching upon religion, or upon the higher things of the mind, literary, aesthetic or otherwise. All that the sketch aims at is to illustrate certain of the main differences between the Hindu system of life and our Western systems; so that the reader may judge for himself how far they may legitimately enter into the arguments for or against any particular method of dealing with the political issues which are at the moment in the scales. The topic may conveniently be treated under three categories—personal, social, and economic.

### I. *Personal.*

Of all the influences in Hinduism which most directly and constantly affect the individual the chief is Caste. Its grip on men's lives may be measured by the rigour of its penalties; for no social ostracism that is within our experience at all approaches in severity the treatment of the Hindu who is ejected from his caste. But the sanctions of a system have a way of varying in proportion to its fragility; and, if it is granted that there is a good case for Caste, the apparent harshness of its laws may be condoned. That there is such a case, is forcibly argued by the orthodox Hindu. Caste moderates personal ambitions and checks the bitterness of competition. It gives a man, whatever his position in life, a society in which he can be at home even when he is among strangers. For the poor man, it serves as a club, a trade union, and a mutual benevolent society, all rolled into one. It ensures continuity and a certain inherited skill in the arts and crafts. And in the moral sphere it means that every man lives content with that place which Destiny has allotted to him, and

uncomplainingly does his best. To the Western mind certain disadvantages in Caste appear obvious. It acts as a curb on initiative and kills the incentive to self-betterment. To a Brahman or a Rajput, his caste may afford a pharisaical satisfaction; but it must be indescribably hard on a man of low caste, however able or ambitious, to realize that he can never claim a better place in the world for himself or his children than that in which he was born. The whole design seems to condemn Hinduism to be a static and not a progressive society. Here we must leave the question, deferring for later consideration its implications, as a negation of the doctrine of human equality, on the political side. The only other relevant fact is that, with most of the chief movements of reform, from Buddhism down to the Arya Samaj, the abolition of Caste has been in the forefront of their creed.

Unlike Caste, the Hindu family organization has to our minds many definite merits. The law of inheritance is no worse than in many parts of Europe; and the solidarity of the family, though as elsewhere the traditional respect for elders is weakening, has won the warm admiration of all observers. The orthodox Joint Family system, however, as defined by Hindu law, has certain drawbacks. Theoretically, and to a very considerable extent in practice, it requires the pooling of the earnings of all its members. A Hindu gentleman who has been successful in the public service or at the bar will often in confidence lament the disappearance in the common purse of all the fruits of his brains and toil, and the horde of incompetent relations who batten upon him. If it were only that the system encourages shameless nepotism (as it does), we might find parallels in other countries. But it fills society with worthless parasites,

even if it has the counterbalancing merit of dispensing with the need for public measures of poor relief. There is a strong feeling among educated Hindus that the Joint Family law stands in need of moderate reform.

Of all personal problems, the most difficult and delicate is the position of woman in Hinduism. It is not without difficulty in Islam, but Turkey and Egypt have shown how promptly it can be altered: no such dramatic change is conceivable for the Hindu. In the Golden Age, it is admitted, the Hindu lady was free, in the choice of her husband and apparently in other matters. How or when this ceased, history does not tell. It is a Hindu cliché that India was driven to the methods of seclusion (or *pardah*) by the licentiousness of its Moslem invaders. Mahomedans retaliate by a different tale; but, wherever the truth may rest, the fact remains that, at the present day, over a large part of India, it is among many of the upper castes a sign of respectability to shut away the ladies of the family, from early girlhood, in an enclosed part of the family home, to debar them from all male society except of their nearest relatives, and to impose conditions of life which must be permanently injurious to bodily health and mental freshness. The defence of the system (apart from the sentimental argument that woman's highest duty is her husband's service) is that women are protected and sheltered, that the sexual promiscuity which some Indian writers angrily ascribe to European life is prevented, and that the *pardah* ladies themselves find pleasure in their position and would not exchange it for greater freedom. The last assertion is being disproved by the growing insistence of the younger generation of educated Indian women on emancipation. But the final condemnation of the

custom lies in the unhealthy conditions which it enforces upon the mothers of the race and upon the upbringing of children. It is probable that *pardah* is doomed: but there would be grave danger in too rapid a change, and in the interests of the women themselves its dissolution should follow, or at least accompany, rather than precede, a much wider extension of female education than is at present in prospect.

Child marriage and its consequences have recently filled an arena of controversy into which, for present purposes, it is unnecessary to descend. The marriage of children is admittedly a widespread usage; a committee of experts, mainly Indians, reported in 1929 that nearly 50 per cent. of Indian girls are married before the age of 15. The excuse is often heard that cohabitation is always deferred until it is physiologically safe; but in a vast number of cases the reverse is true, and the evil is the most crushing of all handicaps to India's physical well-being and moral progress. There the subject may be left. The evil is one which Indians alone can remedy, and indeed a small section of reformers are already working eagerly upon it in defiance of orthodox thunderbolts. But a word is necessary on a kindred question, the treatment of Hindu widows. Here again apologists are lyrical on the glory of woman's sacrifice—often, it may be, to the memory of a husband with whom she had never passed a single happy day. It is the same sort of argument as used to be brandished in support of *Sati*, when that horror was threatened by British humanitarians; but vicarious idealism of this inexpensive type does not palliate the misery of countless thousands of women's lives spent in the circumstances of deliberate degradation and privation which Hindu tradition fastens upon the childless widow.

The ban on remarriage is, both in itself and in its practical implications, one of the sharpest differences between Hindu and Western usage.

## II. *Social.*

The first of all the great social services, Education, has had a chequered and unhappy career in India. By ancient Hindu law, it was reserved for the twice-born: if a man of low estate read the Vedas, he was guilty of a capital offence. In more modern times there were excellent indigenous schools for the study of Sanskrit, mathematics, grammar, and astronomy; with the three R's for poor men's sons and nothing for his daughters. At an early stage of the British occupation it was decided (largely on the insistence of Lord Macaulay) to make the English language the medium for secondary and higher instruction; ever since then, trouble has multiplied. The curriculum got away from the genius of Hinduism, and never came right. University education was pursued merely as the avenue to government employment; mnemonics took the place of intelligence: and the ancient culture faded, with nothing to replace it. The masses of young men who swarmed into the colleges fell out in thousands by the way; but whether they achieved a degree or not, it seemed that they had nothing of any commercial value to offer in the end, and the majority joined the ranks of hungry discontent, from which revolutionary crime drew its recruits. Primary education meanwhile was making slow and halting progress, starved of funds and unsupported by any popular demand. Expert on expert, commission on commission, toiled at schemes for reforming the whole system. Here and there, promise broke through, and higher education in particular has made

great strides towards better things; but elementary instruction never seems to have adjusted itself; and financial considerations, even if there were no other, have prevented it from becoming either free or compulsory. The census test of literacy was a man's ability to read and write a letter in his own vernacular, and at the last census the application of this test showed only one man in every eight to be literate, and one woman in every fifty-six.

When the new Constitution was taking shape in 1919, there arose an insistent demand that education should be withdrawn from the control of permanent officials in the provincial governments and handed over to Indian Ministers. This was conceded, with the reservation of the Universities, and in the last ten years large sums of money have gone into the expansion of mass education. For an analysis of the results there is precise authority in a report, published in 1929, by a mixed Commission of Indian and English experts who were specially appointed to examine this phase of India's progress under the new régime. It was a competent and impartial body, in full sympathy with the difficulties of the position, and it gave full credit to the leaders of public opinion for attempting to understand and grapple with the problems of education; but here is its verdict on the results:

Throughout the whole educational system there is waste and ineffectiveness. In the primary system, which from our point of view should be designed to produce literacy and the capacity to exercise an intelligent vote, the waste is appalling. So far as we can judge, the vast increase in numbers in primary schools produces no commensurate increase in literacy, for only a small proportion of those who are at the primary stage reach Class IV, in which the attainment of literacy may be expected. . . .



The wastage in the case of girls is even more serious than in the case of boys. The disparity in education and literacy between women and men, so far from decreasing by the effort made, is actually increasing. The disparity between the wealthier parts of the country and the poorer parts also tends to increase.

In the sphere of secondary education there has been an advance in some respects . . . ; but here again there are grave defects of organization. The whole system of secondary education is still dominated by the ideal that every boy who enters a secondary school should prepare himself for the university, and the immense numbers of failures at matriculation and in the university examinations indicate a great waste of effort. Such attempts as have been made to provide vocational and industrial training have little contact with the educational system and are therefore largely infructuous.

The most depressing feature, although no novelty, is the persistent unreadiness of the ordinary Hindu parent to educate his daughters. It is rooted partly in the fear that education will modernize women, and throw them adrift from the anchorage of their own faith and traditions, but also partly in the conviction that education is of no use to a woman in fulfilling her primary duty of bearing and bringing up children. So long as this view permeates Hinduism to the extent to which it does to-day there is a wide chasm between it and modern ideals. Here is the same Commission's summary of their conclusions on this particular branch of their inquiry:

Despite the growing increase in girls' education, the measures taken to promote it have been inadequate. The education of the girl is the education of the mother. The school-education of each additional girl counts more towards the future than the school-education of an additional boy. We are definitely of opinion that, in the interests of the advance of Indian education as a whole, priority should now

be given to the claims of girls' education in every scheme of expansion.

The second great social service in which Hinduism departs from modern practice in the West is medical relief. The world has suffered sufficiently from quackery, and still suffers: but in no civilized land does the hand of the witch-doctor lie so heavily on the people as in India. It is associated on one side with a herbalism for which much might be said, and on the other with obsolete nostrums attributed to Galen and Hippocrates; the resultant body of indigenous medicine being wholly inadequate in our eyes. Such as it is, it has not even the merit of being applied by qualified practitioners. The country groans under an immense volume of preventible sickness and pain. Great work has been done by the British Government, aided—to their eternal credit—by private and missionary bodies from many lands, in training medical men and women, and in building up hospitals; but in most of the latter the treatment is necessarily elementary, and if we take all the public hospitals in British India together, they barely provide one bed for every 5,000 of the population. In the towns help of a reasonably efficient type is usually available; but out in the open countryside it is rare and remote, such as only a man of exceptional means can command. Village practice has no attractions for the Indian doctor who has been trained in our colleges; and the plain truth is that, until an entirely new conception of domestic hygiene is set up, his field of usefulness would be terribly restricted. Fatalism accepts diseases of malnutrition, neglect, and dirt as inevitable; and the healing art finds its chief field in such surgery as offers and the distribution of simple prophylactics.

If the absence of medical relief is in general appalling, it is particularly acute in maternity work. The torture of mothers and the waste of child-life are subjects on which it is impossible to be precise without entering into technical details for which this is not an appropriate medium. That very great lady, the late Begam Mother of Bhopal, taught the world something of how Indian women feel for each other's suffering and how deeply they resent the system which perpetuates it. Together with marriage reform and female education, this subject completes a field in which the sentiment and practice of Hinduism sever it, for good or ill, from those of the Western world.

Allusion has been made to the backwardness of hygiene in the Hindu home. Punctilious in his personal ablutions, the ordinary Hindu is singularly callous as to the purity of his drinking-water or his food, and apparently unconscious of the unhealthy surroundings in which he almost always lives. There is nothing more wonderful, or more pathetic or more unnecessary, than the patience with which the Hindu endures dirt, dust, vermin, and all the deadly plagues with which nature seems to arm herself against man, from the deadly snake to the flea and the mosquito. The British Government has striven, often in the face of vehement opposition, to introduce sewerage and a pure water-supply into the larger cities; but progress is terribly slow, and in the villages it has been practically impossible to move the deadweight of apathy. The toll of deaths from cholera, plague, and abdominal diseases, and the sapping of India's vitality by malaria, call for something more than medical measures. They demand a new standard of human rights, a new ideal of social service, the courage to reject any fatalistic acceptance of avoidable evils—an

angle of vision, in short, at which Hinduism has never yet placed its followers.

### III. *Economic.*

The economic structure of a great and ancient country does not lend itself to extreme condensation; moreover, many of its shortcomings would be quite unfairly charged to Hinduism, except indirectly and in so far as the Hindu outlook on life has generated that fatalism which leads to the acceptance of remediable evils. In India the prime evil for which there is no remedy is a climate which is always enervating and often merciless. The secondary evil for which no remedy has yet been found is the terribly uneven distribution of wealth and the widespread poverty. From these two, most of the other economic troubles of India derive their existence. Most direct in its descent from them, and most devastating, is the waste and impoverishment of human material which is due to disease and dirt. Cholera, bubonic plague, hookworm, and tubercle rage with a fury unknown in the West; but the grimmest of man's foes is malaria, and the mosquito which carries it is the most inveterate and indomitable enemy of Indian progress. It is often thrown in the teeth of the British administrator that he has done little to drain the vast marshy areas in parts of the land, and thus to diminish the haunts of the mosquito. Even, however, if the cultivation of rice and fibres did not make universal drainage an impossible scheme, it would not put an end to the tyranny of the mosquito. His happy hunting-ground is the unsavoury margin of the village pond, the heaps of refuse at the village doors; and his destruction would require a revolution in the domestic habits of the people.

Hardly less disastrous than the ravages of disease are the depredations of man.<sup>1</sup> The subservience of the ordinary Hindu to those social customs which involve him in unwilling extravagance is a grave reproach to those who benefit by it. On frequent occasions in the round of his family life, and particularly at the marriages of his children, he is called upon for fantastic expenditure in feeding the Brahmans and his brethren; and many an honest rustic gets involved, over a single wedding, in debt from which he never escapes. Another terror to the industrious peasant is the monstrous army of beggars who infest the country. No census will ever disclose the multitude of vagrants, in all degrees of sanctity and shamelessness, who prey upon the wage-earners and the cultivators, taking charity when they can, and levying blackmail when they cannot. They are as great a plague as the rats, and almost as universal. Rats, it is calculated, in their destruction of food-stuffs, cost the country more than all the charges for its military defence; but the respect of the old-fashioned Hindu for life is such that he makes no effort to combat them.

Closely allied to the efficiency of the human machine is the efficiency of its output. In India the output is predominantly agricultural, and subject to many a handicap, both of climatic and of social origin, for which it is the ambition—legitimate and not unnatural—of the Nationalist party to provide a remedy by reconstructing India as a great manu-

<sup>1</sup> There are those who would describe them as more disastrous. A competent American observer, for example, Mr. Stanley Jones, though an ardent advocate of self-government for India, reaches the following conclusion: 'Almost every economic ill in India is rooted in religion and social custom. Every time you try to lift India economically, you run into a custom that baulks you.'

facturing country. With this object they are laying up for themselves problems which have a habit of shaking old and stable governments. The few preliminary steps, however, so far taken have led no farther than to the inexorable issue whether protective tariffs can countervail the costliness and inexperience of the labour force. In appearance that force seems almost unlimited; in practice it is unreliable, because not yet reconciled to town life and factory conditions, and it is relatively expensive by reason of the poverty of its physique. State subsidies and tariffs, factory acts and housing reform, are being thrown hastily into the balances, and are bringing Hinduism into healthy contact with modern sociology.

Yet for many a day to come, agriculture will remain the paramount industry, engaging, in one way or another, a full three-fourths of the whole population. To the patient laborious Indian peasant there is little that science can impart as to the economical use of his materials. And in ensuring him against the fickle elements, there is little that has been, or is being, left undone by the British Government, through its irrigation works, some of which are the finest in the world. But neither hereditary skill nor protection against famine can make good some inherent defects in the system of agriculture. It is not begging the question to call them defects; because they are patently handicaps from which, in one way or another, Western agricultural nations have shaken themselves free. Prominent among them is the poverty of the cattle. Vast multitudes of useless animals are allowed to roam through the fields; for their slaughter would to the Hindu be a deadly sin. Half-starved and miserable, they do incalculable

damage to the crops, and form the most frequent cause of quarrels and assaults among the villagers. Very little selective breeding is done, and the stock is deteriorated to the last degree. No cry is more bitter or unnecessary than the constant lament of the peasant about the insufficiency of milk for his children. Equally calamitous as an agricultural handicap is the *morcellement* of holdings, practised until in populous tracts it is inconceivable how the cultivators squeeze a living out of their tiny patches, unfenced and unmanured. There is no money for fertilizers, or efficient ploughs, or sturdy oxen, or healthy wells. Next in this catalogue of ills is the impoverishment of seed, whether of cereals or of fibres. Steeped as a rule in debt, the ordinary tiller of the soil is under contract to carry the produce of his fields as soon as it is harvested to his local money-lender; he is also compelled, by sheer need, to have recourse to that autocrat for advances of seed when sowing-time comes round. Meanwhile the usurer has mixed up the produce of all his debtors, sold the best of it, and kept the poorest stuff to dole out for sowing. At the demonstration farms, with which the British Government dots the country, valiant efforts are made to teach the merits of seed selection, but the results are discouragingly slow.

He has a hard heart who would accuse the Indian peasant, in those circumstances, of being improvident. Yet, by our Western standards, impoverished the peasant is, and burdened with debt to a degree which smothers all incentive to a better scale of life. Even in good seasons, he has rarely any savings which he can call his own; but if fortune specially favours him, there is only one form which his savings take. It is not a deposit in a savings-bank; it is the purchase

of some simple ornaments of silver for his wife or daughters; and these, with their risk of depreciation in value or of robbery, are the sole reserve on which he can fall back when harvests go wrong or the money-lender threatens. In the matter of savings, however, the rich man is little wiser than the poor. Centuries of chaos and arbitrary rule have so ingrained habits of hiding and hoarding among the people that the merest fraction of the national wealth has as yet been induced to enrol itself in the campaign of industrial development. Between 1913 and 1924 the net imports of gold and silver into India were £360 millions in value; and a recent inquiry by an American Commission suggests that the amount of the precious metals stored in India is as great as that held by the United States of America, though with the vital difference that the Indian store is immobilized and sterile. Banking and the deposit of savings are matters of mutual confidence, a quality which the history and traditions of India have not encouraged; and though the co-operative movement in its degree has worked wonders, yet its sphere is far too limited to exercise a material influence towards a healthier system of domestic finance.

No attempt to contrast two civilizations or two social organisms can justly lend itself to summary; and in this chapter, which must now close, there has been no endeavour at a critical analysis of Hinduism in its role of keeping a great human society together. Every feature of Hindu life to which allusion has been made is rooted in some historical or ethical compost, perhaps long overlaid and forgotten; and for a perfect understanding, much closer knowledge would be required. All that it is intended to convey in the preceding sketch is the existence, under



the cloak of Hinduism, of peculiarities which are not found to-day, and some of which have never been found, among peoples who have achieved Nationhood and wrought up democracy into a workable political system.

## CHAPTER V

### NATIONALISM IN POLITICS

IF, as we must assume, democracy is a necessary phase in human evolution, India is fated to encounter it. In similar encounters in the past, other nations have made mistakes and gained experience from which India may properly benefit; but, in every recent case, the agency that has made the experiment possible has been some form or other of genuine Nationalism. In previous chapters an outline has been given of the genesis of that powerful and widespread movement in India which takes to itself the name and title of Nationalism, but which analysis showed to be the restlessness of the old rigid section of Hinduism, stirring in alarm and anger against the threatened imposition upon it of Western machinery and methods. Some of the chief limitations of the movement were then touched upon. It has lukewarm support in the Moslem community, who amount to 70 out of India's 320 millions: and indeed the great mass of Moslem opinion is suspicious of its pretensions, and definitely determined that in no circumstances will they consent to a constitution which does not secure for them special privileges and adequate protection against being overwhelmed by the Hindus. There is also in the background the gigantic task of bringing into a national union the divergent races and regional communities which are at present severed by languages so dissociated that even their alphabets in many cases are totally dissimilar. From the limitations of the movement the argument turned to some of the labours which lie before it, in reforming the social and economic life of India, ere it can

transform itself into the type of Nationalist power which draws nations triumphantly into the front line of our modern ideals of human organization. As we went along, we paid tribute to the efforts of groups and societies of reformers inside the Hindu world to stir up their people to the removal of handicaps to India's progress, and we lamented the apathy and hostility that have hampered their enthusiasms.

Our next step is obviously to consider what measures can be taken by the community as a whole to generate a true spirit of Nationalism, and to advance the general well-being with an authority and a momentum which are beyond the individual reformer. Whatever those measures may be, they cannot spring up *in vacuo*. A political framework is necessary, on which they can be erected and dovetailed into the perfect structure; and hence we arrive inevitably at the question of that form of constitution which will give India the freest play for its own genius, and at the same time the greatest facility for drawing into its own mechanism whatever it can usefully take and adapt from Western methods and practices. Before we address ourselves to the details of this issue, there are three general propositions which should help us, and a digression which is somewhat overdue.

The first proposition is that the constitution must be one which ultimately makes for national freedom. We have no prophet in these degenerate days to foretell the future of tropical and semi-tropical races, or the design which Providence may have in store for maintaining their vitality against the narcotics of Nature; and it would be folly to assume that the plan of Destiny will be the permanent dominion of an alien

power. In other words, any political programme for India must envisage its attaining in time—and the sooner, the better—a right to that theoretical equality which pertains to civilized nations.

Second, the constitution must be so framed as to give the people of India—and not any limited section of them—a full and deliberate opportunity of deciding, and of enforcing their decision, what steps will be taken, and when, to remove the obstacles to unity and progress—in plain language, how far and how fast they wish to convert a belligerent Hinduism into a genuine Nationalism.

Third, the constitution, to meet the existing circumstances of India, will have to be of a type entirely novel in history. It sounds audacious to talk here<sup>1</sup> about a unique type of federalism; for America has, as the saying is, forgotten more about federalism than the rest of the world knows. But it is an audacity designed to introduce (and here is the threatened digression) a complexity in the problem which, in spite of its high importance, has been designedly kept back until it now falls into its proper place—to wit, the treatment of the Indian States.

Hitherto, we have been thinking of India as a whole, and of its British connexion. But within the boundaries of India there are over 70,000 square miles and 65 million inhabitants who are not under the Union Jack at all. This territory comprises over 200 different States, of greatly varying size, which are ruled with varying degrees of sovereignty by their own Chiefs or Princes. The enchanted Vale of Kashmir is one of them; the mines of Golconda lie in another. The largest (Hyderabad) is more extensive

<sup>1</sup> It will be recalled that these lectures were delivered in the United States.

than the two Carolinas combined, and it is as populous as New York and New Jersey taken together. Kashmir in area is larger than New England. Below these are all sorts of sizes, down to the tiniest principalities of a few square miles, with no outward appearance of independence. In the larger States, the rulers have absolute powers, make their own laws, levy their own taxes, maintain their own armies. These heterogeneous units do not constitute continuous blocks of territory. If you took the map of the United States and found that Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming formed an independent kingdom outside the Union, Oregon another in the north, and Texas another in the south, the two Carolinas here, Kentucky and Tennessee there, a patch stretching from Washington to Richmond, another from St. Louis to Milwaukee, and so on, until you had eaten up 40 per cent. of the total area, you would then have in this country a position similar to that of India.

Now, however these scattered States may differ—and they do differ widely in language, races, laws, and customs—they all have this in common, that they are not subordinate to the government in British India. In the Viceroy of India there resides a power, either by agreement or by convention, to interfere in the event of grave misrule, and he is represented at the Courts of the greater Princes by British residents, who advise and sometimes admonish. But (speaking again of the larger Princes) they base their independent status on treaties made generally with the East India Company in the days of its early struggles. Those treaties Queen Victoria pledged herself to honour when the Company disappeared; and though the Princes accept the British Crown as the para-

mount power, they certainly do not regard themselves—and this they have emphatically repeated within the last few months—as under any allegiance or obligations to the governing authorities in British India.

How, it may be asked (at the risk of a digression within a digression), how does the Nationalism which is exciting British India ferment in these States? The answer is that it has made very little impression. The Princes, unlike the British Government, do not tolerate open sedition, and make short work of malcontents. But the real secret lies in the unquestioned popularity of one-man rule. It accords with the age-long tradition of the land, and it gives the multitude a person whom they can venerate, as opposed to an impersonal or a distributed power which they can never understand. And this popularity the Princes as a rule know by inherited experience how to retain. The individual Prince may be hard on his people: they accept that as destiny. He may confuse the State revenues with his privy purse: so long as he is open-handed and stately, nobody minds. He may introduce the most daring Western novelties—electric light and traction, handsome public buildings with all the latest equipment, &c.: Mysore, for example, is in these respects the most advanced city in India. He may summon a legislative assembly to ratify his laws and approve of his budget. He may even, as the ruler of Baroda did, ordain compulsory education in his State. But he will not, in any circumstances, lay hands on the sacred edifice of Hinduism, even if he is himself, as for example the Nizam of Hyderabad, a Moslem by faith. It is this knowledge, that the whole social system of orthodox Hinduism is safe, not only against any direct attack by the governing power,

but also against any innovations which might imperil its mastery over men's minds and lives—it is this knowledge which keeps the rulers of the States secure upon their thrones.

Let us return to the dilemma which was beginning to face us when we were considering the juridical positions of States which, though they have no international status and though they are debarred from forming treaties or waging wars between themselves, are yet invested with so much sovereignty in domestic matters that they are independent of any government or governments in British India. The dilemma is completed by the fact that, their territories being intermingled as they are with British India, the closest economic relations must necessarily subsist between the two sets of areas. Take railroads for example: the trunk-line from Bombay to Delhi runs through British territory in the main, but also through long stretches in half a dozen independent States; and yet these different sections of the line cannot be under as many separate controls. Or take customs: goods consigned to States enter through British ports and pay duty there, or goods may enter at State ports (for some of them are maritime as well as inland) and be consumed in British territory: how is the tariff revenue to be apportioned? Again, the postal and telegraph facilities of the country must be uniform: it would be possible, but it would be extremely inconvenient, to have over 200 different and independent postal authorities in the land. So with currency, whether paper or minted, with the control of through highroads, with extradition and what not. Obviously, unless the country is to revert to mediæval chaos, some means of economic and administrative unity must be established between

British India and the States. Hitherto the Viceroy, acting on one hand as the head of the Indian Government and on the other as representative of the Crown, has been able to hold the balance. But as British India travels towards freedom and popular government, it is clear that the presence of these large and powerful autocracies in its midst will not make for simplicity in the Constitution.

With this additional problem<sup>1</sup> thrown into our basket of troubles, we now come back to the question of questions in India: What is the political framework which is going to make possible her transformation, if transformation is desired, into a modern State? Political architecture may be a little deficient in imagination, but at the moment it has only two outstanding styles, known as autocracy and democracy. In spite of the general propositions set out above, the former alternative has frequently been advocated. No one, in public at least, has gone so far as to suggest that some scion of the old imperial Mogul family should be discovered and put on the peacock throne at Delhi. But it has often been seriously argued that our best and easiest way out of the present difficulties would be to divide up British India into a suitable number of independent kingdoms, each under its own native ruler; the contention being that Indian sentiment and tradition would thus be satisfied. Apart, however, from the difficulty of manufacturing Maharajas by mass production, the process would hardly accord with modern political practice. It has therefore been apparent to all who have thought over the matter for the last<sup>2</sup> generation—and it has never long been out of the minds of the last generation of British administrators—that the only building we can design for the future constitution of India is some-



thing approximating to that building of all our dreams—a true Democracy.

The cheapest form of sagacity is wisdom after the event; and we are frequently assured that, if Great Britain had arrived at and announced this decision earlier, it would have averted much of the trouble which now besets it. This is probably true: Great Britain never seems to learn the extra value that attaches to gifts if they are given gracefully and early. It must be conceded that we were unduly tardy in planning and making a start with free institutions. But in fairness let the difficulties be remembered. When the Crown (i.e. the British Government and Parliament) took over the business of ruling India seventy years ago, its functions in reality were delegated to a mere handful of British administrators on the spot. The Civil Service proper, or administrative staff, consisted, half a century ago, of not more than one thousand men. They formed only one wheel in the big machine; but the soldiers had their own problems, the educationalists and engineers had theirs, the missionaries, from this land and others, had very special preoccupations; and so on. The working out of any political future rested specifically on the administrative staff. Its strength was one man for every quarter of a million people; and on that man a burden lay which left him very little leisure for abstract thought. In those earlier years there was a constant battle against lawlessness and crime: gangs of professional housebreakers and robbers swarmed, and agrarian outrages never ceased. As law became established and an adequate police organized, the recurring famines had to be tackled: the great irrigation works are known to the world, but little is ever heard of the elaborate machinery for the prevention

and relief of distress through drought which is in daily operation. Then the land tenures—a source of constant friction and injustice—had to be fixed and recorded. Municipal government had next to be set on its feet, with hospitals and hygiene in its train, schools and roads and jails, and all the cantankerous sequels of local taxation. When some such foundations had been laid, there poured out, to occupy them, the bigger national problems of education and industrial development. Of a truth our hands were full enough in those laborious years.

If we thought that we had got our machinery into some sort of working order, our complacency was shattered by a masteifful Viceroy who descended upon India some thirty years ago, to tell us that our plant was obsolete and our methods archaic. In the overhaul which followed under Lord Curzon's vigorous supervision, the claims of self-government were forgotten; but on his departure there came a sharp reminder that all was not well, in the form of an outbreak of revolutionary crime, conspiracies, and assassination, with which his successor had to cope. A tentative beginning was thereupon made in bringing Indians into closer association with the work of government. The Morley-Minto Reforms (as they were called) of 1909 did not give Indians direct responsibility for the management of public business, and they did not recognize the elective principle. But they brought representatives of the educated, the moneyed and the landed classes into the legislative bodies in sufficient strength to give them a genuine power of criticism, and of influencing the administration indirectly. John Morley, lifelong radical though he was, protested that he was not paving the way for parliamentary institutions: nevertheless, he was

unconsciously marching along the road which the American secession had taught Great Britain to travel in its handling of the commonwealth—first to representative government, and through it to the grant of full responsibility.

With the operating of the Morley-Minto Reforms, the present alinement of Indian politicians began to define itself, and the rumblings of a distressed orthodoxy swelled into volcanic proportions. There was a section of liberal-minded and progressive men (no women as yet) who leaped to the front, both in legislative work and in social reform. They were ready to co-operate with the British in the evolution of enlightened self-government; and they accepted the inevitability of moving by steps towards the distant scene. Simultaneous with their appearance came an outburst of violence, with an obviously commanding underground organization, and a frank appeal to some of the more sinister superstitions of archaic Hinduism. At first, the latter movement took no political guise: it was pure nihilism. Young men, sometimes half-witted, sometimes maddened by inability to find a living, were employed to use the bomb or the dagger on officials, police, and occasionally quite inoffensive Europeans. When brought to justice, they were acclaimed in the vernacular press as martyrs, and any form of repression, however essential in the general interest, was stigmatized as revolting tyranny. The genuine reformers were desperately embarrassed by the revolutionary activities, but, in spite of themselves, most of them were slowly swept into the current of extremism. The process continues to-day. Reasonable men, or men who would be reasonable if they dared, occasionally struggle to the bank and attempt to clamber on to

the firm ground of co-operation with the British; but up comes another wave of excitement against a government which can do no right, and they are carried out into the full stream again.

The Great War brought a lull. It brought also the final conviction that the prancings of discontent must be curbed by the bridle of responsibility. Great Britain is sometimes twitted with having flung concessions at India, to keep her quiet during those critical years. Nothing could be farther from the truth. A complete scheme of reform was on the anvil before the war broke out and, though the spontaneous loyalty of India's Princes and peoples surprised the British public into a mood of special generosity, it would not have taken the form it did if the whole project had not been thoroughly canvassed before. In August 1917, after the most anxious consideration of a Cabinet (then a Coalition Government) deeply immersed in the grave preoccupations of war, a pronouncement was made in the House of Commons, which pledged Great Britain for all time. It was a declaration of a threefold policy:

- (a) that the goal of British rule is the progressive realization of responsible government for India within the Empire;
- (b) that this goal is to be reached by stages, starting with the first stage at once; and
- (c) that the time and measure of each advance are to be determined by the British Parliament, which will be guided in their decision by the sense of responsibility and the degree of co-operation evinced by India's leaders.

These principles were translated into an elaborate constitution, which became law at Christmas, 1919,

and is known as the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, from Mr. Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State, and Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, who were joint authors of the project.

In the broad design there were two essential features, which have been vehemently assailed by the Indian extremist. The principle of arriving at self-government by stages was, and remains, the cardinal point of British policy. The attainment of Dominion status (and what that means, as an abstract term, our jurists have still to discover) has been, in the case of every part of the British Commonwealth, a matter of stages: and in the Dominions the obstacles to political unity and advance have been as dust in the balance, compared with those which stand between India and its goal. Progress by stages seemed, to those who enunciated the policy, a direct and inevitable consequence of the inexperience of Indian leaders in the art of administration. That art in any country needs training and practice; the skill it calls for is based on traditions and perfected by long apprenticeship; the power it demands is rooted in the support and loyalty of a party system. In India, outside the larger Indian States, no experience in administration has been acquired by Indian leaders during the last 200 years, and no experience in democratic institutions for the last 2,000 years or more. The present leaders have had no apprenticeship in affairs: they are acute in criticism, able and persuasive in oratory, but with no practice in the handling of men. Finally, there is no party system, to accustom future statesmen to work out reasonable policies, and defend and explain them to the electorate. Incidentally, it may be added that there is not much of an electorate, but that will come later.

On all these grounds, accordingly, it seemed to those who framed the Constitution of 1919 the most elementary common sense that those who might be called to great responsibility in Indian affairs should be given ample opportunity of learning their business, by first gaining experience (from their own mistakes, if you like) in a restricted field before they were put in a position to influence the happiness and well-being of the millions in a wider sphere.

The second integral feature of the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme, which has called down the fury of the extremist, is the vesting in the British Parliament of a jurisdiction over the pace of advance. 'We', cry the critics, 'are a great and ancient nation. No one, British Parliament or other, has any right to dictate our future. That is for us, and for us alone, to determine. Your pretensions to judge of our fitness to rule ourselves are merely a part of your intolerable racial arrogance.' This point of view we can all see and appreciate; and if India were a united nation, yearning for self-government, we should all agree that it would be indeed intolerable for another nation to sit in judgement on her claims. But, given the type of Nationalism which we are considering—a Nationalism imperfect in itself and not yet abreast of its own most vital problems—and given the lack of experience and responsibility which handicaps its leaders, can we possibly avoid, at this stage of transition and experiment, the employment of an outside umpire to settle the pace and the conditions of this march into the unknown?

With all its merits or demerits, the Constitution of 1919 was an honest attempt, made at a time of unexampled difficulty, to provide a beginning in free institutions, and it offered a great occasion of true and

practical patriotism to men of goodwill. Unhappily, goodwill was not what it ever at any time met with: the very stars in their courses seemed to fight against it. For its baptism, a revolution broke out in the Punjab, martial law had to be proclaimed, and the sternest measures of repression adopted. Before it was out of its swaddling clothes, the border tribes on the frontier skirmished an invasion, and then the King of Afghanistan declared an unprovoked war upon us and followed up their attack. Both our assailants were fishing in troubled waters, just as the Afridis did in the autumn of 1930 outside Peshawar, and providing a foretaste of what will happen when the arm of authority is weakened in India. The war was costly. It was succeeded by the world-wide inflation of currency and prices; the Indian budget was upset, and the revenues which had been expected for social reform ran short, while the fall in the value of their earnings scattered discontent broadcast among the urban population. It was in this unpropitious environment that the new Constitution had to struggle through its infancy. It was upon this confused and angry scene that there leaped the arresting figure of Mahatma Gandhi.

If, at the time of the Crusades, contemporary opinion had been collected regarding Peter the Hermit, it would probably have sounded very like the expressions which Mr. Gandhi's name evokes to-day. Dispassionate observers would record their admiration of his unselfishness, his simplicity of life, his high idealism, the power of his simple oratory on the masses, and his absolute refusal to count the cost of his mission. His followers, even those who have never seen him, would be lashed into fierce enthusiasm by his name, the reports of his asceticism, and his

message. The Saracens would probably have been found using much the same language as the harassed Indian official is sometimes tempted to employ to-day. If from the views of contemporaries we pass to the verdict of historians, will not a certain similarity again appear? What, in both cases, they will say, has been the outcome of it all? The Crusades, according to a recent French writer, *décongestionnaient le féodalisme*. Mr. Gandhi's crusade has rallied orthodox Hinduism: and the value of that operation to a world which is now deeply sensitive to movements in any part of it, awaits a calmer judgement than it is possible for most of us to apply to it to-day.

What actually happened when Mr. Gandhi threw himself into the arena is well known. He was virtually given a dictatorship by the National Congress at Christmas, 1920, and immediately launched a campaign of non-violent disobedience to all constituted British authority. The ignorant masses on which he played could not, in their simple minds, harmonize a revolt against the Government with non-violence: and the movement degenerated into scenes of outrage and bloodshed which were checked only in March 1922, when Mr. Gandhi was put on his trial for sedition and sent to prison. No popular excitement attended his sentence. When he was released in less than two years, after an operation in gaol for appendicitis, he was allowed to retire into his hermitage. His recent return to lead the dramatic attacks upon the salt-laws suggests certain reflections, which admirers of Mr. Gandhi may resent, but which, in the interests of truth, it is important to consider. How is it that he has twice been acclaimed as leader of a frankly revolutionary movement, and that in the interval he



has been pushed on one side, ignored, even definitely slighted on at least one occasion? He has experienced almost exactly the same treatment as Mrs. Annie Besant. She was put at the head of the first agitation which adopted 'home rule' as its battle-cry: she was actually elected President of the National Congress, the first woman ever so chosen; and yet there came a time when she was repudiated and insulted by those who had worked with her and for whom she had toiled. Jealousy and the fickle mob count for much in India, as elsewhere, but they do not furnish all the explanation here. It lies, beyond much doubt, in the heresies into which these two ardent souls have been betrayed. So long as Mr. Gandhi was content with benevolence towards the wretched outcastes, or Mrs. Besant to toy with theosophy, they were treated with tolerant amusement. For they were otherwise in the full service of traditional Hinduism: they were useful: they were courageous. But when Mr. Gandhi pressed upon his followers his philanthropic work for the Untouchables, just as when Mrs. Besant raised the flag of genuine social reform, orthodoxy took alarm: they were deposed and pushed into retirement until they should purge their offences and cool their embarrassing ardour. In other words, Mr. Gandhi has been almost consistently used as a catspaw by cleverer and less scrupulous brains in the orthodox camp. So was Mrs. Besant in her day. It is not a new situation in history for the simple-minded ascetic to be employed as the unconscious agent of fanaticism; but it gives us an illustration of the power and resource of a movement which, in spite of its claims, is something essentially different from our ordinary conception of Nationalism.

To the various storms of electric excitement con-

nected with Mr. Gandhi's name, there have been added all sorts of atmospheric disturbances spreading over the entire Indian sky. The economic difficulties of high prices and inadequate wages have already been mentioned. Even more serious, because more intangible, were the emotional grievances. India was caught up in the whirlwind of racial sensibility which was sweeping Asia, 'the claim of the East', as Sir John Simon puts it, 'for due recognition of status', the 'demand for equality with Europeans and a resentment against any suspicion of differential treatment'. Its nerves were thrilling to the sounds of defiance in Egypt, the triumphant assertiveness of Turkey against Europe, the stirring of unfathomable waters in Russia. Bolshevik agents, it is true, have not been effective proselytizers, for the spirit of Bolshevism is inherently antipathetic to Hinduism, but they have added to the general feeling of unsettlement and discontent with the existing order of things. Among the great mass of the rural population, all this has not sunk very deep, but it has produced flutterings of restlessness which make outbreaks, agrarian and racial, more frequent than usual. At heart, the peasantry and indeed most of the landed classes have little interest in the forms of government over which others are wrangling. A government which leaves them alone, does not over-tax them, and gives them justice when they ask for it, satisfies their political creed; and there are no signs that they want to get rid of the British official, but very distinctly the reverse. Among the humbler classes in the towns, however, the contagion has spread, mainly owing to a suspicion that the hand of government has lost its power; and when once suspicion circulates, elements of permanent lawlessness elbow their way to the

front. Among the classes with English education, the fever is at its height, and all the arguments of an apparent Nationalism—emotional, intellectual, economic, and racial—are woven into an unassailable evangel; while the student community, to a man and woman, are aflame with patriotic fervour.

At intervals during the trying period since the passing of the 1919 Charter, it seemed as if moderate counsels might do something to stem the rising political excitement. While the National Congress had been completely captured by the extremists and drifted steadily into irreconcilable hostility to the British connexion, its pace and methods, rather than its goal, were always viewed with some uneasiness by that section of the advanced Hindu party who used to be known as the Moderates and now call themselves the Liberals. They are heirs of the men who, a generation or two ago, came under the glamour of the *esprits forts* of the Victorian age, and many of them still hope for some form of accord between Hinduism and Westernism. But their position is one of considerable difficulty. From time to time they move along the lines of political action until they reach a point at which it looks as if co-operation with the British Government for a definite political purpose were becoming possible. Then orthodoxy sounds the alarm, and the Moderates grasp at a grievance behind which they can retreat. In 1909, when a substantial measure of constitutional influence (known as the Morley-Minto Reform) was offered, the Moderates under a leader of pre-eminent ability, the late Mr. G. K. Gokhale, were prepared to accept it. The word, however, went round that the British officials were plotting to neutralize the reform by executive action, and the Moderates drifted off into

opposition and were welcomed, as returned prodigals, into the Congress camp. Similarly in 1919 they were grateful participants in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. But they were sharply called to order; and the events of Amritsar gave them grounds for reverting to the dictatorship of Mr. Gandhi. Again, they seemed drawn to the gifts offered by the Simon Commission; but pressure was ruthlessly applied on them to halt, and they soon joined the cry that the proposals of the Commission were 'an insult to the Intelligentsia'. It is of course easy to condemn such vacillation; but outsiders know little of the tremendous forces behind the scenes, in every sphere of his social relations and in the bosom of his family, that can be brought to bear in Hindu life upon any one who looks round for liberty.

In the first decade, then, of the recognition of Hindu nationalism as a political power, it achieved nothing constructive. The Moslem minority remained suspicious and discontented. Except for a few individuals who spasmodically appealed for moderation, the Hindu leaders moved rapidly towards extremes of speech and claim, which excited their irresponsible followers to extremes of action. The moneyed classes for the first time showed practical sympathy with the elements of unrest, and mob outrages, particularly in the towns of Western India, have been reinforced by subsidized rowdies. Divided counsels in the new form of government, and the constant attacks on the agents of law and order, shook the old impressive front of the government's authority, and the traditional respect of the people for it was weakened. That the British are preparing to abdicate is a suspicion that began to sit heavily on the minds of many who were their best friends, and a shifting of allegiances

ceased to be unthinkable. That the kaleidoscope was settling down into a fixed picture of nationhood was the claim of those who were most energetic in shaking it, but the impartial observer found little evidence of any such tendency.

## CHAPTER VI

### A NATIONAL FUTURE FOR INDIA

INHERENTLY, as we have seen, the Constitution of 1919 was intended to be a work of test and trial, of advance by measured stages. Among its provisions there figured prominently an injunction that, after the first stage had endured for ten years, the British Parliament should send out a Commission to inquire into its working, and to advise whether India was ready for a second instalment of political progress. Despite the fire and storm which barred its path, the Constitution had struggled through these ten allotted years, and the statutory inquiry was undertaken. Little had its authors foreseen the conditions under which their commission was to start its labours. As to the working of the Constitution, there was little to inquire or report, save that it had survived the continuous attempts to wreck it: a few sensible and public-spirited men had taken office under it, but without either failure or distinction; and as an agency for training Indian leaders in the art and practice of administration, it had not been allowed to accomplish anything of substance. As to India's readiness for a second stage of advance, the evidence remained where it was ten years before, except for the progress which a certain section of India's sons had made in their demands and their vehemence. The Commission itself, with that eminent lawyer and statesman, Sir John Simon, as its chairman, was composed of seven members drawn from both Houses and from all three political parties, but it included no Indian member and no representative of the Indian Government. The former omission was immediately anathe-

matized by the caucus in India, as an indignity to their country. There was, of course, no such intention. Parliament was merely collecting its information in its own way, through a body of its own members carefully chosen as being unbiased by any previous knowledge of India. In the hope, however, of removing any suspicion of unfairness, a committee of leading Indians was appointed by the Viceroy to work alongside and in close consultation with the Simon Commission, reporting its conclusions independently. But nothing availed to stop the outcry. A boycott of the Commission was proclaimed and enforced, with several attempts at personal violence.

Whether as a sociological study of a great oriental country or as an addition to the science of Constitutions, it is difficult to overstate the interest or the constructive skill of the report which the Simon Commission prepared. Time will not allow of more than a very brief indication of its main proposals; and in order to make them intelligible, it is first necessary to outline the present administrative framework of India. At the outset let it be premised that nothing hitherto said in these chapters applies to Burma. Burma is a land which looks out upon the East rather than the West. Geographically severed from India by wild mountain masses, its only connexion is by sea, and it is more nearly akin to Siam and the Malay Peninsula. Its people and its languages are entirely distinct from anything in India, and Buddhism is its religion. Indians in considerable numbers have migrated to it, but they are not popular as citizens, Chinese on the contrary being welcome settlers. The Simon Commission accordingly advised that Burma should cease to be a province of India, and in this respect they have met with almost general

assent. What follows, therefore, relates to India proper without Burma.

The country is divided into British India and the Indian States, which at the moment need not be discussed again. British India consists of eight great provinces and several minor units, one of which is that perennial duelling-ground known as the North-west-Frontier Province. In each of the eight great provinces, the administrative machine is composed of the Governor with a dual cabinet as the executive authority, a legislative council mainly elected on a moderate franchise, and the permanent public services in which, though a limited number of the superior posts are reserved for Englishmen, the great mass of the appointments are filled by Indians. The dual Cabinet has only five or six members, who carry in their portfolios all the subjects which are administered in the province: but while one half of the Cabinet consists of ministers drawn from and amenable to the legislative council, the other half comprises chiefly officials, its members being appointed by the Crown, and irremovable for their term of office (usually five years), and responsible only to the British Parliament. Here is the field of training and practice which the 1919 Constitution intended to provide; for ministers, though working with and helped and advised by their official colleagues, are entrusted with definite duties and are answerable for the proper conduct of their departments. The activities of State which have been placed in their charge are not lacking in importance; they include education, medical and sanitation work, agriculture, municipal government, excise, and others of less moment. Outside the field of training and experiment, for the time being, are the departments



controlled by the official half of the Cabinet, and including the administration of the law and justice, the police, land tenures and revenue, irrigation, forests, and certain others. Such is the headquarters organization, on which the nickname of Diarchy has been fastened. The actual burden of carrying on the daily business of government in direct dealings with the people lies on the district officer, who is the pivot of the whole system, and the backbone of the administration. Space will not allow of a portrait of that long-suffering man; but if he is removed or his authority impaired or discouraged by political change, India may as well put up her shutters.

Binding the provinces together is the central government, located at India's former capital, Delhi. Its main figures are the Viceroy or Governor-General, with a cabinet of seven or eight members appointed by the Crown (of whom two or three are usually Indians) as the executive, and a bicameral legislature. The Lower House, or Assembly, is mainly an elected body, with a leaven of official members; and the Council of State, or Upper House, is also composite in its membership, with a high franchise for its elective element. For defining the powers of the two Houses and the relations between them, there are elaborate provisions which need not be here described. It is only necessary to emphasize that the central legislature as a whole has, with certain reservations, a wide legislative authority, including the control of the greater part of the central budget. The main reservation is an emergency<sup>t</sup> power vested in the Governor-General to veto a law, or to make a law which the Assembly has rejected, or to restore a budget which it has damaged, if such interference is

'essential for the safety, tranquillity or interests of British India or any part thereof'. The provincial Governors, it ought to be added, have a parallel authority within their respective spheres. It is noteworthy, however, that this emergency arm has been very rarely used during the ten years of its existence. In this collocation of an irremovable executive and an irresponsible legislature we have an obviously transitory arrangement which has seriously hampered efficient government, though it has provided Indian reformers with an opportunity of passing certain measures of social amendment which they will not have the responsibility of administering.

The functions of the Central Government are concerned with those activities of the State which cannot be cut up into provincial compartments. The defence of India, its foreign relations, the management of its railways, posts, and telegraphs, and the collection of the revenue from customs, salt, and the taxation of incomes, clearly fall within this definition: so that we have certain elements of a federal system already in operation. In addition, however, the Central Government has the duty of supervising and controlling the provincial governments generally, and more particularly that section of the provincial sphere which has not been transferred to Ministers: for in this way the chain of responsibility from the British Parliament down to the district officer is link by link maintained. The Indian States are not, as we have already seen, under the Central Government, although the Viceroy, as agent for the Crown, has extensive powers of admonition and, in grave emergencies, of intervention. Here also, however, we may see the dawning rays of federation, as the Princes have a Chamber of their own, in which they meet for the

discussion of matters of common interest to their States, as well as of apprehension to their Order. To complete the sketch, a word is necessary about the defence of India. Its army is composed of a striking force for frontier, trans-frontier, and overseas emergencies, a garrison force, and a force for the preservation of internal security, the total number of effectives being under a quarter of a million men. Actually serving with the colours, there are at present about 60,000 British troops and 160,000 Indian. The Indian battalions have a small cadre of British officers; but even this is being reduced as young Indians are receiving training at Sandhurst to qualify for commissioned rank in certain selected regiments. A halting and not very encouraging start has been made with an Indian navy; but a small naval force known as the Indian Marine polices the coasts and the Persian Gulf, while the British Navy keeps its benevolent eye on any larger measures of defence that may ever be necessary.

Such is the administrative machine which the Simon Commission found in operation. They also found wave upon wave of frenzied excitement dashing against the bulwarks of the British administration, the business of the country seriously held up, and the scattered and overworked officials struggling against impossible odds. They saw the demands of the extremists swelling every day, without any indication of what would happen if they were gratified. They also saw—and escaped—bombs thrown by would-be assassins from the gallery of the Central Assembly. Their report ignored all this, and took both a long view and a dispassionate view of India's political future. Its recommendations pursued three main lines of thought. In the first place, the Com-

mission found the only hope for a united Indian nationality in the developing of a federal system. Secondly, they believed that in the meantime India's enthusiasms must be brought into contact with facts, and steadied by much more genuine responsibility than had been delegated in the past. Thirdly, they held that a strong guiding hand must be maintained in India until its fervour is transmuted into practical statesmanship. These conclusions do not amount to a scheme for complete self-government, but they mark a very striking advance towards it. Inasmuch, however, as they do not concede the immediate liberty demanded in the Nationalist propaganda, let us examine them in their broad significance and see how far they accord with the three axioms enunciated at the beginning of the last Chapter.

The first recommendation is the keynote of the whole symphony. If India is to be released from the bonds of a pseudo-Nationalism and dedicated to the quest of a true Nationality, its ideal must be a united land, a land freed from sectarian feuds and the tyranny of class, drawn out of itself and its limitations by a higher patriotism. But there cannot be one patriotism for British India, and another for the territory of the Indian Princes. They must be brought into one structure, and the only possible structure is a federation. That is the argument of idealism: equally powerful are the practical considerations. The Princes will never accept subordination to a democratic government in India. There is nothing to prevent them from accepting equality. There is everything in favour of it—the common control of their joint interests, the agreed regulation of their economic relations. And the agency for such equality is federation. On all grounds,

therefore, it is with a view to a future Federated States of India that the new Constitution must be shaped. The federation will not be an easy task. We were justified in describing it, a little time ago, as unique, because no historical precedent exists for the federating of a bundle of democratic units of different races and languages with a bunch of autocratic units enjoying varying degrees of sovereignty. Time and good will must find the way of doing it. Meanwhile the Commission were careful that nothing should be done to add to the difficulties. They would accordingly leave the Central Government much as it is, but they would improve its legislature. The Council of State (or Upper House) would assume a senatorial character by having the qualifications for membership raised and by retaining a considerable element of nomination. The Lower House would be renamed the Federal Assembly, with a strength of between 250 and 280: and instead of being elected on a somewhat haphazard franchise, the bulk of its members would be chosen by the provincial legislature under a system of Proportional Representation.

That is as far as this part of the scheme can be carried at present. A federal constitution is not built in a day, and much hard thinking and wise negotiating has to be done before the structure begins to rise. One pregnant suggestion, however, was put forward with some earnestness by the Commission: to wit, a redistribution of the British provinces. They are clumsy and artificial administrative units: most of them are also far too big, three of them having a population of over 40 millions each, and the smallest of them having eight millions. A larger number of more homogeneous units would furnish better material for federating. They would also allow of

more racial and linguistic unity in each province, with a keener vigilance in public affairs and a more genuine local patriotism. The present tendency is for Indian politicians of any eminence to turn their backs on provincial business and concentrate on the Assembly at Delhi, where oratory takes the place of constructive statecraft. Set them down in areas where they and their antecedents are known, where they are judged by their work and not by their rhetoric, and you may get the more active minds of India harnessed to the real tasks of public duty.

From the federal future let us descend to the immediate present and the second of our broad conclusions. Here it is that we have the outstanding forward movement of the scheme. Ignoring all the turmoil of the past, all the refusal to co-operate in the experiment of 1919 and all the attempts to wreck it, the Commission proposed to throw open to the Indian leaders a wide and a generous field for exercising the responsibilities of government. They advised for each of the great provinces what is virtually autonomy in the provincial sphere; and the manner of their new structure is as follows. Beginning with the franchise, they would extend it to 20 per cent. of the adult population, special measures being taken to increase the voting strength of women. To those accustomed to universal suffrage, this may seem a timorous figure. But it is three times as large as to-day's electorate, and it sends the franchise racing far ahead of literacy; for even with the present voters, grotesque devices have to be invented, in order that they may know who or what they are voting for. The hard fact, however, which finally limits the electoral rolls is peculiarly significant. It is the impossibility of finding enough persons com-

petent to act as returning officers and custodians of the ballot for a larger number of voters than is now proposed. Moving from the electorate to the Legislative Council, it was proposed that this body be substantially enlarged, so as to secure an adequate representation of all considerable interests in the province down to the depressed classes or untouchables, and so also as to provide specially for the minority communities who might otherwise be jostled out in the polling, such as the Indian Christians. From the legislature, in correct parliamentary fashion, Ministers would be chosen and a Cabinet formed; and to the Cabinet would be entrusted the whole of the provincial administration, including the control of the magistracy and the police, and the safeguarding of law and order within their bounds. The Governor was not to be debarred from introducing into his Cabinet a permanent official of standing and experience; and as, in many cases, he himself would be new to India, it would frequently be prudent for him to do so. But otherwise his Ministers would have the widest administrative powers and would be wholly answerable to the legislature, and through it to the electorate. Their transitional period of training and tutelage would come to an end: the Indian leaders would now have the making or marring of their own future.

To the provincial Governor the Commission assigned a role of peculiar difficulty. Not only would he have to counsel and guide his Ministers in their new duties, but in certain special circumstances he would have in reserve a power to overrule them. Lest it be suggested that in this way the independence of Ministers was being subtly neutralized, it was clearly set out that this emergency power was intended for

use only when necessary (*a*) to preserve the safety and tranquillity of the province, and (*b*) to prevent serious prejudice to minorities. Thus the particular difficulties which our earlier analysis indicated as the most serious impediments to progress would remain—as they are and always have been—the special and personal care of the head of the provincial government. In one other important crisis the Governor would carry a responsibility from which Ministers might well shrink: it would be on his, and only on his, requisition that regular troops might be employed in quelling internal disturbances.

This leads to the third and last of the Commission's guiding principles. We have seen that a federal union and federal leadership, if only because the units of the federation have not yet taken up their alinement, are still ideals of the future. We have realized that the Ministers of the new provincial governments will be launching out into troubled waters with little experience in navigation. Clearly, then, there must be some provision for the directing and the ballasting of the Ship of State in her early voyages. In plain language, we cannot afford—the world cannot afford—to have disastrous mistakes while the new agencies of administration are learning their work, and building up their credit. To this end the Commission advised that the army in India, both British and Indian troops, should be left exclusively under the orders of the Crown, as represented by the Viceroy and his executive officer, the Commander-in-Chief; thus securing unified control both for the external defence of India and as the ultimate authority for the preservation of internal order. 'An army of occupation', cries the extremist, 'and a badge of slavery!' 'No', the Commission would reply, 'the bow



of Ulysses, which you have not yet the strength to bend, and a weapon which has never yet been used except for your safety and your honour!’

The Simon Commission’s report contained the complete drawings and designs of the constitutional structure: the foregoing is only the merest thumbnail sketch of its elevation. It is not a structure planned for eternity: but it should serve as an abode of comfort and dignity until India can raise an abiding national fabric of her own. To those who complain that it is cramped or unworthy, let us recall its main features. In all the great provinces—as large in area and population as some of the chief countries in Europe—Indian leaders are being given the widest responsibility in domestic government, with all the equipment of modern democratic practice, and with a public service to help them which is rich in its traditions of skill and integrity. At the centre, pending the slow evolution of a federation for all-India, a Federal Assembly is being established, with extensive powers of influencing the central executive. And, in order that this great forward step towards the promised goal of complete self-government may be consolidated without anarchy or anxiety, the British Government retains in its hands the external defence of the country, as well as a power to intervene, if intervention should become necessary as a last resort to check internal disturbances. The three axiomatic needs of a new Constitution, as we interpreted them, have been fulfilled.

But how does all this appeal to those who matter most, the peoples of India themselves? The question is one which none of us can answer. Surely, it may be said, the answer is writ large in the storm of the last six months, in the boycott and lawlessness, in

the marching and countermarching of revolutionary force. Not so. All this fury of protest was planned long before the Commission's scheme was produced. The orders for the uproar were given by men who protested loudly that they had not read, and would never read, the Commission's report; the disturbances are the work of mobs who have no conception of what the proposals imply. All that they know—these turbulent, illiterate, subsidized hooligans—is that the hand of government has been weakened, and that the course is clear for the glorious excitement of defying authority. All that their leaders care for is that the excitement should become sufficiently widespread and sufficiently dangerous to frighten England into capitulation.

And when she does capitulate, what do they hope for, the most sincere as well as the most sinister of the leaders of all this recent agitation? Do they themselves know? Not so long ago, their cry was Provincial Autonomy, or virtually what is now being offered. They also seized upon Federation as a catch-word, but never did they sit down to work out its laborious implications. All this, however, they left behind when they raised their demand to 'Dominion Status', by which they presumably meant home-rule, with the British army and navy standing by to protect them from outside aggression, and from each other. But here also they gave little thought to the wishes of the Indian States, and the only form of Dominion constitution which they ever attempted to draft was met with implacable hostility by the great majority of their Moslem fellows. Finally, they have now united (except for a few much-perturbed moderates) in their supreme call for entire independence outside the British Commonwealth. Not one of them in his

heart believes that this is possible or has the remotest wish for it. At the best, it is insanity: at the worst, it is a stupid piece of bargaining bluff which does their intelligence little credit.

It is now time to close. All of us who know and love India and her people are sad that this clash of civilizations has come; we had hoped that time and growing enlightenment would have softened and abated it. In serving India we had acquired an affection for the good that is in her—for the pious, gentle-mannered, charitable, kindly Hindus of the old school, who perhaps after all are the truly orthodox; for the simple, laborious peasantry, whether untouchable or not; for the sturdy, humorous, impecunious Moslem who will ride with you and hunt with you and cap Persian verses with you and regale you with the latest village scandal—for all sorts and conditions of men, and children. It is quite as much out of that affection as for the selfishness often ascribed to us, that we have no wish to see the people condemned to the suffering which would follow the premature withdrawal of British control. For suffering there would undoubtedly be. The existing tension between Hindus and Moslems would break out into a general conflagration. In time the Indian States would undoubtedly be drawn into the conflict. And once chaos was well established, it needs no pessimist to foresee that our good neighbour the Afghan would feel bound, as so often before, to come in upon one flank, and probably the indomitable little warriors of Nepal on the other. The world would soon have a second China upon its hands.

This opportunity of trying to put the facts of the Indian situation before an audience such as that at Williamstown has been highly valued. Those who

know something of India at first-hand and who have worked for her progress are sensitive to the verdict of American opinion and experience upon the handling of the problem. It is not an easy problem and there are no short-cuts to its solution. For much that our forefathers did in the early years of the British occupation, no Englishman would hold a brief. Even in later years, when the spirit has wholly changed, we have made our blunders, and in particular we cultivated efficiency too long without regard to the natural wish of the people to have a larger share in the management of their own affairs. But we gave India a liberty she had never enjoyed before; we gave her a clean government and justice, and many other things which we prize ourselves. And now we have definitely promised her the final gift of self-government, and Britain's honour is pledged to the fulfilment of that promise. The only difference between us and the Indian patriot is the pace at which it is safe to move towards that goal. He wants to get there at once; we see the dangers. We also see, though we do not want to brandish them aloft, the inherent weaknesses in India's life which she must subdue before she can step into line with the great nations, and we believe that only by the long and patient co-operation of Britons and Indians can those weaknesses be overcome and the clash of civilizations converted into human harmony.

## EPILOGUE

WITHIN a few weeks after the foregoing chapters first took form as lectures at Williamstown, the Indian situation underwent a dramatic change. As far back as October 1929, Sir John Simon had recommended that, when his Commission had finished its work, the British Government should set up 'some sort of conference' to consider the results, and to see how much agreement could be reached for the proposals which would finally be submitted to Parliament for the future of India. To this the Prime Minister cordially assented; it was to be an earnest of good faith and goodwill, and a proof that the British Government hoped to carry Indian opinion with it in its project of a new constitution. The 'Round Table Conference' accordingly assembled in London on the 12th November 1930. The occasion was unique. Often had the destiny of India turned on the fate of battle, but never before on the thrust-and-parry at a council table. For the first time in history were India's own sons—and, stranger still, her daughters—called in to advise on her emancipation from foreign rule, to lay the foundations of a true national future. The *mise en scène* was worthy of the occasion. Invitations had gone from the British Government to representatives of all the great communities in India, to the leaders of all the different political schools, to the champions of many minor causes, and to a group of the Indian Princes eminent both for their enlightenment and in their territorial dignity. There met them in conclave a delegation of British politicians, headed by the Prime Minister (Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald) and drawn from all

three political parties. The conference was opened by H.M. King George in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords, and St. James's Palace was assigned for its meetings. They went on until the 19th January 1931, when the Conference broke up after a valedictory speech by the Prime Minister defining the policy on which his government had determined as a result of the consultations.\* He explained, for reasons which will be apparent below, that the Conference was not closed, but merely prorogued pending further spade-work to be done in India.

Popular interest and sentiment were aroused by the picturesque character of the Conference, by the magnitude of its issues, by the persuasive eloquence of many of its members. When the glamour abated, there were many who doubted if its results had responded to their hopes. Yet the results were sufficiently remarkable, and they may best be considered by dwelling on the four outstanding features of the Conference.

(1) Though the invitations to the Round Table had been catholic, there was from the acceptances one noteworthy omission. The National Congress, now the stronghold of the most intransigent section of Hinduism, had refused to participate, unless they received certain prior guarantees. These were to include a promise that India would be given the right to secede at will from the British Empire; that she would be endowed with complete responsible government; and that she would be at liberty to invoke outside arbitration on 'such British claims and concessions, including the so-called national debt of India, as may seem to the national government to be unjust or not in the interest of the people of India'. Not unnaturally, the Viceroy, when this pistol was

held at his head, did not see his way to tie the hands of a free conference by any such stipulations, whereupon the Congress refused the invitations to its delegates. The Round Table was thus shorn of any representation of the most extreme and the most vocal school of Indian political thought. It had no opportunity of hearing what future the Congressman pictures for an India outside the British connexion; it had no opportunity of bringing his projects into the clear light of free discussion, under which fancies melt and extravagancies fade. On the outcome of the Conference the effect of the Congress abstention was that, however cordially any conclusion might be accepted by the representatives of Hinduism round the table, there was no assurance that it would not be contumeliously rejected when they took it back to India.

(2) Nothing in the prospects of the Conference had been more incalculable than the attitude of the Princes. It was known that they viewed with concern the growth of democratic pretensions in British India; democracy is not in their scheme of life, and yet political conceptions have a habit of leaping over geographical boundaries. It was also known that they were dissatisfied at what they regard as encroachments by the Paramount Power on their sovereign rights. A Machiavelli might have speculated that they would probably play each of these sources of apprehension against the other. They might, for example, be tempted to offer terms to the Nationalists, which would both secure the gratitude of that camp and impress the Paramount Power with the danger of further straining the loyalty of its feudatories. They might so frame the offer that, if it materialized, it would enable them to stem the tide

of democracy in their own borders, and also to avert interference in their domestic affairs by the Paramount Power. The British public, however, is not rich in Machiavellis; and widespread surprise was felt when, at the very outset of the Conference, the Princes rose to announce their adhesion to the principle of Federation. It was to be a federation of the States and British India, into which the Princes would come only 'of their own free will, and on terms which will secure the just rights of their States and subjects'. To many of the implications of this declaration nothing but summary attention was given.

(3) Meanwhile one implication was patent, and on it the Nationalist delegates fastened with unerring tenacity. If the central government of India is to be federal in type, and inasmuch as the States, which will be members of the federation, are outside the control of the British Parliament, therefore the federation, as a whole, must be equally independent. As one of the Princes put it: 'We cannot federate with the present government of India, and we are not going to make any sacrifices and delegate any of our sovereign powers unless and until we can share them honourably and fully with British India in the federal executive and legislature. We cannot come in with responsibility to Parliament.' Thus it was on this question of the status of the central government that the real business of the Conference quickly focused. Complete Autonomy was the demand of the Hindu majority; Responsibility with Safeguards was the concession of the British parliamentarians. The discussion ended on a note of uneasy and provisional compromise. There were those among the Indian delegates who were ready to accept safeguards if only they were assured of independence; there were others



who made no secret of their dislike for any limitations and counted on their immediate rejection by the Congress; there were still others, as we shall see below, to whom certain safeguards were vital; while outside all three were observers, both Indian and British, who were convinced that no safeguards will in practice long retain a much higher value than the paper on which they are recorded. In his concluding speech the Prime Minister announced the policy of his government as being complete responsibility for the provincial administrations and, at the centre, responsibility of the executive to a federal legislature, subject to the following reservations during a period of transition:

(a) The defence of India and its external affairs to be reserved to the Governor-General; i.e. the Army not to be under popular control;

(b) The financial obligations, stability, and credit of India to be effectively protected;

(c) The Governor-General (and in provinces the Governor) to have special powers of intervention in emergency, for the purpose of maintaining public order and tranquillity; and

(d) The rights of minorities and of the public services to be prescribed by statute, and to be enforced by the Governor-General (or Governor) when necessary.

Seeing how lacking these reservations were in precision, and how much remained to be fitted in to the design for the structure of a federal government, the Prime Minister declared the Conference suspended, in order that opinion in India might be consulted and expedients considered for overcoming the difficulties which had arisen.

(4) Pre-eminent among those difficulties had been

the question of minorities. The Moslems, though supporting their colleagues in the argument for autonomy, had made no secret of their growing uneasiness at the prospect of an independent central federation and semi-independent provinces, in all of which the influence would be dominantly Hindu. It was not only the ordinary disabilities of a voting minority that they feared, but also the risks to the cultural and religious life of their community. In the end, they put forward a series of defensive propositions, including claims to special representation upon the executives of the central and provincial governments, and the earmarking of a definite ratio of seats in the legislatures, to be filled by Moslems elected on separate communal voting rolls. On these proposals debate round the table was long and heated; it was supplemented by the most earnest endeavours of British well-wishers outside to secure a compromise. All was in vain. The strictly orthodox Hindu section of the Conference, pressed though they were on all sides, and even by their own more moderate colleagues, doggedly resisted the doctrine of communal representation. It was fatal, they argued, to the whole conception of national unity, it was undemocratic, it would intensify the ill-feeling already existing between the two religions, and so forth. Every argument likely to tell with a western audience was exploited; but of course the truth lay deeper. It was not the secular antagonism of the two communities that we were witnessing; this was to be demonstrated later and more crudely in the massacres at Cawnpore. It was the old traditional Hinduism at bay. Here at last were the intruding British preparing to abdicate. Here, after many centuries of foreign domination, was the way opening

for the emergence of Hinduism as a great national power, supported by most of the Princes, attired externally in western institutions, but cherishing its own ancient ideals in its heart. Was it tolerable that so fair a prospect should be marred by the insistence of the Moslems on a racial reserve, in which brahmanism would have no place and an alien and hated rule of life would be perpetuated? In the circumstances no compromise was found possible. The Hindu purists held their ground; the Moslems, fully alive to the fundamental issues involved, offered no surrender.

Thus the best that the Prime Minister could claim for the Round Table was that it had resulted in 'a substantial measure of agreement on the main ground-plan' of a new constitution. The type of structure to be erected was left for discussion in India and for further meetings of the Conference. In effect, if we leave aside those of the Simon Commission's recommendations which were accepted in passing, the Round Table had been exclusively occupied by two main principles. To the first of these, the principle of federation, assent had seemed to be universal. The Simon Commission had emphasized its primary importance; the Indian politician had grasped at it as the gateway to autonomy, the Indian Prince as a guarantee of his sovereign rights. But every detail and every difficulty had been left untouched. The second main principle was veiled in mist. Upon the establishment of a fully-powered federal legislature, however and whenever embodied, the central executive of the future must be made responsible to it, and not to the British Parliament. This much was generally admitted; but under the surface courtesies of the Conference ragged acute

differences of opinion as to the time and manner of relinquishing the control of Parliament. The provisional conclusion of the British Government, as we have seen, was that, during a period of transition (whatever this may mean) certain safeguards and reservations are essential. The hope was expressed that, before the Round Table should again be convoked, the Indian leaders would get together and carry on the constructive work which had been started in London, and more particularly that they should arrive at some agreement upon the safeguarding of minorities. As matters turned out, nothing of the kind was done, and the Conference meets in September 1931, at exactly the point where it broke off nine months earlier, with only two differences; first, that racial animosities are now running higher in India than since the days of the Moguls; and second, that Mr. Gandhi has been persuaded to bring the Congress views to the Round Table. As those views do not go beyond the abolition of all safeguards, orthodox Hinduism has still to prove to the world its ability and its will to design a true Nationhood for India.

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